

Vol. IV, No. 2

WINTER 1954

CROSS CURRENTS

*A QUARTERLY REVIEW
to explore the implications
of Christianity for our times*

LECLERCQ • DAWSON • SCHELER
SCHMEMMANN • SEILER • CARROUGES

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CROSS CURRENTS is published quarterly by Cross Currents Corporation, a non-profit membership corporation, at 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. Editorial communications should be addressed to Joseph E. Cunneen, Demarest, N. J. CLOster 5-0366J. The price is \$1. per issue, \$3 per yearly subscription. Canada \$3.30, Foreign \$4. Subscription Department, 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y. UNiversity 5-4480. Copyright 1953 by Cross Currents Corporation. Printed in the U.S.A. by the Waldon Press, 203 Wooster St., New York 12, N. Y. Entered as Second Class Matter February 25, 1952, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. 541

MATURITY AND THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Editorial

IN the last issue we began a series of notes in which we hope to describe part of the ideal behind CROSS CURRENTS, and some of the attitudes behind our selection of articles. The first note was a preliminary reminder that very often the "simple truth" is not simple, and that assumptions and desires often lead men to tolerate and at times succumb to impatient ignorance. There has been an increasing awareness of this among Christians in our generation, particularly in Europe. It was this realization that led to the founding of CROSS CURRENTS. To reduce the time-lag between Europe and America, we reprint articles which attempt to clarify one or another of the problems which confront Christians today. This note will deal with moral maturity; we feel that there is a need for open discussion of this subject among those interested in responsible Christian decisions.

Nineteenth-century Catholic immigration, somewhat like earlier Protestant immigration, tended to set up communities which had a huddled, frontier, and obsequious relationship to their moral leaders. This unhappy condition has persisted until today Christian groups form in large part "the lonely crowd" which David Riesmann has described: whether over-docile or motivated by social pressures, they are often far from a fully responsible Christian life. For the world has grown, larger, broader, more complex. An educated man living and working in our society may not find the temptations of the flesh simple but can usually see the issues as clear-cut. His most significant moral decisions are of a vastly different order, and he meets the moral universe on a thousand different points in a single day. Formulas are of small help here. What he needs is an informed conscience and a constant sense of spiritual renewal. What he needs to carry into the complexity of existence is the conviction (not just the knowledge) that he is a son of God, that his work, his rest, his play, are parts of an elaborate mosaic whose lines trail off into the infinite; that it is given to him through love to share in the divine. It would be a healthy sign if it were recognized that for informed, mature, responsible Christians the ideal is not the slot-machine approach to morals, with the priest or minister as answer man. A Christian, ideally, should not want anyone to form his conscience. But he ought to be glad to have any help he can get to teach him how to form his own right conscience. In practice he must make his own moral decisions and perform his own moral acts in any event. The spiritual welfare of a man can depend precisely on his capacity to reach mature judgments to the measure of his own abilities.

For the act of faith is a total commitment. It should reasonably be the point of departure for a lifetime of service and devotion. It almost makes better sense not to believe in God formally, than formally to believe in Him and yet remain obviously unaffected by the belief. But belief in God can mean many things. An uncaused cause may satisfy a metaphysical need and yet have no

effect on the personal life of the metaphysician. A God who has created man and the universe and who sustains their existence is immediately an object of worship. But the God of the Christian act of faith is far more than an object of worship. He is preeminently a God of Love. The Incarnation has made Christianity a unique religion. The drama of the Christian soul is a struggle toward participation in divinity by sharing in an act of love which has already taken place and which for the Christian remains the central experience of human existence as it is of the history of the universe.

It follows naturally enough that man should love God and should pass through prayer to a state of union with, and submission to, the Divine Will. Those who speak of these things as if they can easily be done if only one puts one's mind to them just confuse the situation. After all, it is easy enough to acknowledge that God should be loved, but it is far from easy to live that love in the concrete. It is easy to say prayers but not at all easy to pray. It is precisely in this area of spirituality that the layman requires competent guidance and it is here that he so rarely receives any. Interior prayer is an attainment the layman is left to cultivate on his own. The spiritual life is not a fashionable subject in our pulpits.

What is particularly important here is the effect of this despiritualized Christian preaching on the teaching of morals. The man who has felt the commitment to love in Christ ought not to conceive the ideal of his human acts as avoidance of sin but as a striving after a richer participation in the life of the spirit. Sin is a deviation from the brotherhood of Christ. The neglect of spirituality in preaching has resulted in a moral teaching which is detached from its roots. And this is made all the worse when so often the teaching is purely negative, not a theology of human acts, but only a theology of sin. The consequence is the teaching of morals as pure legalism, a set of rules to be followed, a list of actions not to be committed: a morality of the prefabricated conscience.

I N recent years there has been a genuine ferment of ideas in Western Europe, and to some extent in the United States, and one of its most significant developments has been a revival of interest in religious affairs. Theology and metaphysics have recaptured the attention of educated men in general, after a long period of sequestration. This broader intellectual ferment has been closely paralleled by an unprecedented concern with religion on the part of sizable numbers of laymen of all faiths. The result of the meeting at this point in history of theology and the world of the existential concrete has been a quiet revolution in the life of our time. It has vitally affected the position of the theologian, who is not only a scientist interpreting and preserving the *depositum fidei* but one who also has a vital function in penetrating society with the Christian message. The theologian and moralist, however, is not of himself an authority on the plurality of experience in the world of daily reality. This is why, if Christian principles are to manifest themselves to the fullest extent in contemporary society it must be by a continual interpenetration of sacred science, secular learning and practical experience. It is imperative that the

theologian and moralist now know a great deal more than one aspect of their own discipline if they are to become effective in the world of the contingent—just as it is essential that all Christians drink deep of the well of sacred doctrine if they are to justify their usefulness in the Christian commonwealth of the spirit.

The layman has a particular responsibility in helping to reveal this world of the contingent to the theologian. His personal testimony is necessary if the moral theologian is to know what questions most need further elucidation. It is only in this way that the insufficiency of some aspects of current pastoral practice can be brought clearly into focus. A connection can then be made between the teaching in the seminaries, popular preaching, and what appears to be an excessive concern with the sins of the flesh and an exclusively, individualistic attitude towards salvation. Much can be learned if we laymen will freely discuss with our priests and ministers the difficulties we have in making a serious examination of conscience. Are there not sins against certain commandments of which very few of us even accuse ourselves today? What sense of group responsibility do we possess, whether in the face of segregation in our town, or in a situation in which the apparent immediate good of the Church as institution may be in at least partial conflict with the good of the secular community at large? And whether it be a question of lying, reading, an attitude toward prosperity, or a problem in marriage, do we not tend chiefly to take a negative and dominantly legalistic approach, anxious for the ready answer, perhaps simply looking for assurance that, for example, the requirements of a living wage are satisfied if we pay whatever is the current standard?

These questions are raised to suggest the kind of work that must be done. Tentative and incomplete as the expression of some of these problems may be, we offer these notes as an invitation to our readers to help us carry on more, and more extensive, studies in this area. Surely the building of an informed, mature and responsible Christian community is a task worthy of the devotion of Christians everywhere.

HOLINESS AND THE TEMPORAL

JACQUES LECLERCQ

AT first I thought of calling this article, "Will hell produce saints?", a title which would have had shock value, with its reminder of Cesbron's novel which made a sensation, not only because of its subject but because of its title, "Saints in Hell." On thinking it over, however, I decided that such a title would hardly be conducive to serious thought. Besides, the number of those who reflect is small, and in affairs of this kind, we must avoid seeking a popular success instead of God's work. The latter is rarely spectacular, and when it is, it is up to God to decide.

What we are concerned with in this article is a problem which touches on certain fundamental aspects of the supernatural life. The question of relations between Christianity and the realm of the temporal is a major preoccupation these days, because it is being posed in a new way. Speaking broadly, we might say that it hardly presented itself in primitive Christianity because the first Christians had too little exterior influence to think of making an important impression on everyday life. Then, when Christendom was established in the Middle Ages, we had what Maritain has described as "sacral society," one in which all institutions were presented as applications of Christian thought, without making an effort to distinguish between those things which were inevitable consequences of Christianity and those which were separable from it. Modern times have shattered this Christendom. On one hand, societies that formerly were Christians have become laicized, that is, the communities as such have stopped being Christian; Christians have had to collaborate with non-Christians and they have therefore had to look for bases of collaboration. On the other hand, the universalization of the field of human action has shown with a completely new emphasis that the mass of humanity is not Christian, and that on the level of international collaboration even more than national, we must seek for a common area of understanding between Christians and non-Christians.

From this we can see the problem of the integration of Christianity and of the role of the Christian in the temporal order. The latter appears as a domain in which the Christian is engaged as soon as he leaves church and in which he is necessarily meeting with non-Christians. Certain sentences in the Gospel take on today an emphasis that they previously did not seem to have—for example, "You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt shall lose its savor, with what shall it be salted?" We notice that the salt acts on material by comparison to which it is only a pinch of snuff. The thought of Our Lord

Father Jacques Leclercq has written widely on marriage, and various spiritual and moral problems. His article, "Are there moral heresies?" appeared in CROSS CURRENTS, Spring, 1953. This essay, which should be of service in placing the present discussion of the priest-workers in a wider context, appeared in the outstanding Belgian monthly, LA REVUE NOUVELLE, November 15, 1953.

appears to be that his disciples ought to work on a world which is non-Christian, and this is precisely the problem which is presented to the Christian today.

We are, therefore, considerably preoccupied with the manner in which the Christian takes his position in the world. Moreover, Christianity today is in a different situation from primitive Christianity. The Church is an important institution whose teaching and attitudes make a great impression. Christians are numerous; they are found everywhere; if Tertullian was able to affirm this already at the beginning of the third century, the fact is far more true in our time and indeed they are so numerous and so influential that they can aspire to exercise a decisive influence on the temporal order.

Nevertheless, although this influence could be decisive, it does not seem that we are to consider the reconstitution of a Christendom, that is, of a Christian world closed in on itself, in which an entirely Christian population organizes a society among Christians. In the world of today this Christendom would have to include the whole of humanity, and one cannot see how this condition will be reached in any foreseeable future. Even within the limits of that which made up the old Christendom, the prospect of a mass return to the faith becomes less and less something to be expected, and the number is growing of those who do not even believe this to be desirable. We do not have to examine this question here, but the understanding of the subject of our article requires that these positions be pointed out.

IN addition, the word "holiness" has several meanings. In the modern vocabulary of the Church, it has taken on a precise technical or canonical sense: that of a perfection which the Church authenticates by canonization. The word has so commonly taken on this meaning and the Church is so intent that equivocation be avoided that it has become customary when a book is written about someone of great virtue, but who is still uncanonized, to insert a preliminary note saying that if the word "saint" is sometimes used, it is not to anticipate the judgment which the Church alone is competent to formulate. Outside of historical or theological works, however, the word is nevertheless still used in the more general sense of a perfect Christian; and this is the case (among others) in the novel to which I have made allusion. When the author entitles his book *Saints in Hell*, he does not pretend to be speaking of canonized saints, nor does he pretend to suggest that the characters he is describing are going to be canonized.

In Coccioli's novel, *Heaven and Earth*, which has also been widely discussed, the author recounts the life of a priest. The recital is made by witnesses who present the hero as a saint. The word comes up constantly. But this priest deviates from the classical type of sanctity. Other works, like Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*, present an image of a priest whom the author appears to esteem more or less as a model of priestly perfection, although also far removed from the classical model.

We see how the question presents itself: the saints that the Church canonizes are the Christians that she proposes as models. When the Church canonizes someone, it is as if she said, "Here is someone whom you are able to imitate

with complete security." It is therefore of great interest to discover in what type of life these canonized saints are found and if this can change.

When Cesbron entitles his novel, *Saints in Hell*, it seems that in his eyes hell is a human environment whose painful conditions make the practice of Christian morality almost impossible. Again I am replacing moving and sometimes passionate pictures with abstract formulas. If they cannot have a success of the same kind, they may be better adapted to serious analysis. The problem could also have been posed *a propos* of the environment of the theatre, the cinema, shop-girls, etc., for it is not only material need that presents serious obstacles to virtue. But actually, one likes to link this question with that of the sub-proletariat. Cesbron is not the only one. From this point of view the saints are those priests who are especially concerned to respond totally to the appeal of Christ; in order to respond to this appeal they give up certain conditions that a classical canon of holiness as taught in the seminaries presented as indispensable.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is Coccioli's *Heaven and Earth*. One of the most moving passages in the book is a letter addressed to the hero by a priest from Naples. Three priests have established themselves in a miserable neighborhood, and one must bear in mind the extent of destitution in Naples, and that the time is 1943 while the city was half destroyed by bombardments.

The hero of the book, Don Ardito, has recently published a work in which he explains that one cannot be a Christian without renouncing the desire for possessions, that Christian poverty is a spirit, the renouncement of desire rather than the fact of poverty; we are able to be poor in spirit while remaining rich, and fail to attain poverty of spirit if we continue to desire riches, even though we may be destitute.

After describing the destitution of his poor, the priest from Naples adds: "In order to understand this misery, one must live in it, but in order to live there, one must have the defect that I myself have, the love of sin. For these wretched people are unbelievable sinners... They do nothing but sin, or they desire. If they did not have this desire which is the hope of possession, they would die. Often it is a desire for mere trinkets, but it is a violent desire. The women who give themselves to the first comer, are more apt to do it for a pair of ear-rings than for something to eat. The men, when they steal, prefer to do it for a silk shirt than for bread for their people... In the torpor which dominates them all... the subtle thread of desire holds them awake. I would say that it is their soul. For generations these men have tried to maintain their existence by their hope. By their desire.

"If Jesus, when blessing the poor, was addressing himself to these poor, he has blessed sin, for alongside such poverty I tell you there is nothing but sin."

The signer of the letter installed himself among these poor men. According to his letter, it would seem that he and his companions limited themselves to live among them without exercising any precise ministry: "It seems to me," he writes, "that I bear witness to something of tremendous importance. Excuse me, but I feel solemn. Not to abandon them; no, on the contrary, to remain with them always. To remain with them to the point that we can cover

them with ourselves. To become them, to love them to the point of saying: we are you, and you are us. And the reason for this I do not know, but I know this: I love them."

Then he explains that the episcopal curia looks on them with disfavor, and that they have already been asked to give up their work, but that they would not know how to do this. Doubtless, one day or another, they will be condemned.

It is true, he continues, that a traditional formula says that it is necessary to love sinners and to combat sin. "But what sin do you want me to combat? The desire that gives these people the possibility of living? Desire, hope, that is their soul. Do you want me to tell these people: love your condition and accept it with resignation, you will always be in it, so stop desiring silk shirts and ear-rings? No, that would be to betray them. This would be to sin against the humanity which is in them and our love forbids it..."

The priest who writes this thinks he loves the sin of these unhappy men, because he loves them *in* their sin and he does not see any way of bringing them out of it. Nevertheless, he does not imitate them in their sin, which indicates that he does not love sin as much as he says. We are astonished too, especially since he is a priest, that he does not appear to know that Our Lord promised heaven to these men when he said to the Pharisees: "The courtesans and the publicans will precede you into the kingdom of heaven." If this priest were a little more of a theologian, he would say: "These people do not commit sin, when they commit an act which would be a sin if committed with knowledge of what was at issue and in a deliberate manner." But what he particularly does not seem to understand is that all his difficulties stem from the fact that he is a priest.

If they were laymen, everyone—and especially their bishop—would be full of admiration for them. But they are priests and they do not appear to realize that the priest has a well determined function in the Church.

THE priest is the minister of the sacrifice, of the sacraments and of teaching; his is the government of the community of the faithful. The activity to which the little priests of the poor dedicate themselves in Coccioli's novel is, above all if not entirely, what is traditionally called the temporal works of mercy. But this is not the function of the priest in the Church.

We have the impression that they became priests without much reflection on the proper mission of the priest. To be frank, they are perhaps not responsible for this, because no one has done anything to call their attention to this, such is the preparation for priestly vocations in our days. They have believed (and they have been allowed, and even encouraged to believe this) that a man becomes a priest simply to give himself to souls, nothing more. Even more, they have perhaps been told that if they want to offer themselves to Christ and to souls, they ought to become priests, as if there were no other way of realizing this desire. This attitude shows an inability to conceive of a consecration to God in the lay state: as if a man ought to become a priest the moment he decides to consecrate himself to God and to souls, as if laymen have nothing to do in the Church.

We find here a curious equivocation in the contemporary Christian conscience. On one hand, we speak a great deal of the work of the laity; we explain that the laity have an active role to play in the Church. But on the other hand, each time that a service of the Church is to be filled, priests rush to it. There is a sort of feverish haste in their response, as if they were convinced that they were the only ones that could do the work.

But the tradition of the Church is quite different. During the first centuries, the priest limited himself sharply to the functions that we just mentioned. The apostolate is not peculiarly his task, any more than bearing witness to charity. The works of mercy, visiting the poor, caring for the sick, were entrusted to laymen. Later on, priests occupied more and more numerous functions, including many that belonged to the laity; but the care of the sick was never a priestly function and the visiting of the poor was so only occasionally. All that has always remained in the domain of the laity. Much later, when the Church canonically organized the religious life as a state distinct from both clergy and laity, this work of temporal charity in great measure came to be taken over by communities of religious, men and women, but it was a question of religious who were not priests.

In addition, it has always been in the tradition of priestly religious orders to admit religious who would not become priests, in order to fill non-priestly functions. Several teaching congregations thus have some members who are priests and others who are not; similarly among the Salesians they have associates who are not priests, who are as much members of the congregation as the priests; the little brothers of Charles de Foucauld continue this tradition. Many believe that this is an innovation, but that is because they do not know their history. Nothing is more traditional. What is non-traditional is to make priests do whatever work happens to be pressing.

A man is ordained a priest for the service of a diocese. The priest is the collaborator of a bishop; he ought to fill the priestly office in the area where his bishop places him. This is a matter which Coccioli's little priests of the poor seem to doubt. They are somewhat scandalized—or at least the author of the novel is—to find themselves more or less in difficulties with their bishop; it seems to them that if he were a true minister of Jesus Christ, he would be full of admiration. But the bishop knows what he did when he ordained these men. He ordained them in order to have collaborators in a very concrete work, the administration of the diocese, a task which is far from being accomplished. Filled with generosity, they are leaving for a spiritual adventure, but it is strictly personal. And none of them asks himself: "In order to do this, was there any need of becoming a priest?" St. Francis of Assisi was more perceptive and never asked to be a priest.

I have spent rather a long time on these notions because the point of this article is to try to state more precisely the conditions of holiness. It is not a new idea that good Christians should go out to share the life of the poorest of men and try to aid them in every way, and that the first way of helping would be to love them and to show them that they are loved. What perhaps is new is that some priests should consider that it is more important to renounce in whole or in part the exercise of their priestly function in order to

consecrate themselves to this particular form of charity. I repeat, because it is important and it does not seem to have been pointed out as yet: if the question concerned laymen, no problem would present itself.

I am going to be accused of attacking the priest-workers. Therefore I think it will be good if I say what I think of this experiment.

In itself, the priesthood was not instituted to help form workers; the labor of the worker is a temporal activity and the priest has quite a different mission. If the Church approves of priest-workers, that would be only because of particular circumstances.

These latter are well known. In some regions the working class has detached itself from the Church to the point that contact has been completely broken. In order to re-establish contact, certain priests have attempted to integrate themselves with the worker's world, sharing the worker's life even to the point of performing the same labor. This can well be useful at a particular moment and in a given country, but the state of priest-worker cannot be carried over into a permanent and regular institution. Besides, the experience is new; we do not yet know if priests will remain workers all their lives. We must consider the possibility of a priest living as a worker for several years, in order to have a close contact with the specific living conditions of the environment. But that is a different problem.

Moreover, while the priest-workers are integrating themselves with a worker environment, another movement tends to remove the priest from temporal activities. In the specialized organizations of Catholic Action, as well as in the family movement, there has been an attempt to lay down more precisely the respective roles of priest and layman, in such a way that the priest would be restricted to his priestly function. All this may appear contradictory, but indicates a search for equilibrium. It hardly seems too much to say that at this time the Church is seeking her proper position in modern life, as well as that which each of her members should adopt in this new society which is being born in our time.

A last aspect of the holiness which is presented to us as new in the novels we have been discussing is that it is centered on a great love of the poor to the exclusion of all thought of social reform. This is surprising at a time when the question of social reform has been so emphasized. The heroes of these novels love the wretched in their misery, but they are not planning anything to lift them out of these conditions. They are very different from St. Vincent de Paul, for example, who spent his life in creating ways of alleviating destitution. They give personal help in individual cases, as poor men among the very poor, but they seem to believe it would be less charitable to found a hospital or an orphanage in which at least a certain number of the poor will be drawn out of their misery. For them the perfection of charity is found in the fact of being placed among the destitute as one of them, of bearing witness of Christian presence in their midst. Charity becomes less in their eyes if it takes an institutional form. Father Pierre, of Cesbron's novel, says this specifically, and the little priests of the poor in Coccioli's novel give the same impression.

Some people might say, "Well, they're Italians." But Italy has given us magnificent examples of priests who are founders of societies which work to help the poor, from Saint Cottolengo and Saint John Bosco to the recent creators of cities for abandoned children.

In any case, we feel that here we are meeting with a tendency to propose a type of sanctity that is considered authentic, apart from or even in opposition with the official sanctity of the Church. Its advocates are pleased to emphasize that, in the concrete details of their lives, these "saints" separate themselves from ascetic conceptions or the ordinary discipline of the spiritual life proposed by traditional writers. We get the impression that when these new "saints" read the lives of the saints, they do not feel any desire to imitate them, even though hagiography has been considerably altered for the better in the last thirty years. The type of life of these "saints" does not permit certain objective forms of virtue—for example, a certain gentleness of behavior, or a certain moderation in language.

It is evident that a real problem exists in regard to holiness, and that this problem is linked up with that of the insertion of the Christian in the temporal order.

SINCE the middle ages, a classical conception of holiness has been established, and joined with the idea of religious life. The vast majority of canonized saints ended their lives in a monastery or convent, even if they did not enter at an early age, and as regards those few saints who were not religious, it is emphasized that they lived like religious.

But one of the most notable aspects of the Christian renaissance of the 20th century has been to extend the concern for holiness to every state of life. More and more it is taught that holiness ought not to be the prerogative of only one state, that baptism is by itself a call to holiness and so is marriage. In reaction against the former attitude, we tend to insist on the idea that holiness is not reserved to the religious life—even to the point of sometimes giving the impression that the religious state is no more adapted than any other to the pursuit of holiness. The 20th century has seen the development of a spirituality of marriage which seeks for the conditions of the sanctification of husband and wife in and by marriage, as well as the conception of a lay spirituality, understood as a search for Christian perfection in temporal or secular activity. The word secular here simply means "not religious."

A movement of aspiration to holiness in the general sense of a wholly Christian life is thus born among laborers, white-collar workers, professional men and women, and indeed all those who wish to achieve their Christian perfection while remaining in the state of life that they are in, just as with married couples.

This spirituality enjoys a widespread prestige today. It even seems a partial cause of the numerical lessening of religious vocations, because a certain number of those who formerly would have entered religious life, today decide to consecrate themselves to God while remaining in the world. At the same

time this evolution produces a helpful pressure on the religious state which is obliged to justify its existence by underlining more rigorously what is unique about it. It does not seem that attention has yet been sufficiently drawn upon the profundity with which this development of lay spirituality is transforming the Church, not only in her conception of the life of individual Christians, but in her structures. The religious state has been called to take on other dimensions and a different situation. It will not disappear; it is rather probable that its prestige will grow by being renewed and by having various contradictions eliminated. Whatever the case, in terms of the theme of this article, lay spirituality presents a type of perfection or of integral Christianity which appears to be new. In past ages, we had the impression that there were scarcely any laymen who were saints, and still less were we familiar with the notion of married saints. Are we going to see this now, and will this new spirituality prepare us for this situation?

In addition, the commitment in the realm of the temporal which is characteristic of these Christians obliges them to take certain positions in regard to the temporal order in areas of free discussions where error is frequent. The case is particularly evident when it is a matter of politics and of all that concerns those things on which men are divided. To take a position on these questions means to expose oneself to work in cooperation with impurity. Should not the true Christian remain outside of conflicts and restrict himself to the preaching of peace?

But we are in a period in which the happiness of men, as well as justice, depends above all on social organization. If we wish to work for the social good, is it not necessary to be working for those movements which are helping in this effort? Here again is the problem of taking a position on temporal affairs; would the Church ever be able to canonize someone who has thrown himself into the arena, without appearing to canonize the position that he took?

Let us consider, as an example, a priest-worker who becomes a member of an anti-clerical union because that is where the workers are; who takes part in a strike to show his solidarity with them, even if the attitude of the workers is open to question, even if, in a certain sense, they are partially wrong...

In a general way, the most convinced Christians have the impression that the total service of Christ is today to be found in this direction. But holiness is nothing but the total service of Christ. On the other hand, they feel that the Church will not canonize saints of this type. In this way they come to get the impression that canonized holiness is only a secondary type of holiness, doubtless authentic, but there is another type which is superior to it.

In most minds this impression is obviously not as precise as I express it here and it is not formulated; at most, it is insinuated. What I am doing here is making a kind of psychoanalysis of the Christian conscience, drawing out certain troubling elements from the subconscious in order to present them in broad daylight. In any case, a confused impression is developing in this direction, and books like those to which I referred at the outset, are an expression of this malaise. It is therefore both important and interesting to see the conception of sanctity which the canonization proceedings make manifest.

TO give us an idea of what the Church demands of those whom she canonizes, we take, to begin with, the canonization and beatifications proclaimed from January 1, 1950, until December 31, 1952. Altogether there were ten men and twelve women; there were twelve Italians, seven French, two Spaniards, and a young contemplative from French Africa.

Of the twelve women, ten were religious, and of them eight founded congregations. The two others were Saint Maria Goretti, the young Italian martyr, and Marie-Anne de Jésus de Paredes (1618-1645), the contemplative whom we just mentioned. Among the men, there was a pope (Pius X), three bishops, five religious and a missionary-martyr. There was no layman, and apart from the pope and two bishops, no secular priest. On the other hand, there was a Capuchin lay brother (Saint Ignatius de Laconi, 1701-1781).

This outline is rather suggestive. Canonization takes place in a strongly traditional context. It is that of all the ecclesiastics and religious who live in an environment in which the exercise of charity unrolls in a direction which has been determined. This charity may be heroic, but its direction is controlled by ecclesiastical usages.

Holiness is thus practiced away from the storms of the world. We can hardly imagine one of these saints taking a position on a question in the secular order, inserting himself in the temporal, or taking a fighting attitude for anything except the defense of the faith or for specifically religious interests. This taking of a position in the secular order—unless the defense of a religious interest is being aimed at—seems excluded from their conception of life. They will defend Catholics if they are discriminated against in some way; but we cannot conceive of them hurling themselves into the battle for the liberation of labor in order to obtain an advantage for the workers which is not directly related to religion. Or if they intervene, it will be precisely as mediators, in order to re-establish peace, but without taking sides...

Other elements strengthen this point of view. There have been a few saints who played an active role in the world. One of the most remarkable was Saint Louis, king of France, who was a great king, a good husband, and a good father. The office of his feast indicates what the Church finds in him to present to us as an example. There we are told that he went on a crusade twice, that remaining in Palestine five years, he converted many infidels and ransomed many Christian captives, next that he constructed many monasteries and hospitals, that he was very generous in giving alms, that he visited the sick and even shook them by the hand, that he dressed modestly and mortified himself. There is no mention of the fact that he governed his people wisely, or that he avoided war and established a durable and just peace with England. We are not even told he was married. It would seem that all discussion of that which concerns the realm of the temporal is avoided.

Saint Louis was a layman. We have seen that the most recent groups of those that have been canonized have all been religious, except for one young martyr. Other laymen have also been canonized, but ordinarily they have been princes or kings; can a simple man, concerned with ordinary day-to-day cares?

It is easy to understand that it does not happen often. The man who becomes a saint has consecrated himself totally to God and it would be extraordinary if he remained a mason, a bank-clerk or a notary. To practice professions which aim at the service of God in such an indirect manner, extraordinary circumstances would be necessary. In our time especially, these circumstances are found in the case of the militant worker... But in the past, up to the beginning of our century, such a situation could occur only with difficulty.

The Blessed Anne-Marie Taïgi (1769-1839) had simply been a wife and mother; she never entered the convent, but she aroused the veneration of the Romans among whom she lived by reason of her virtues and her wisdom. It is one example, and fairly recent.

There may be saints, therefore, who are directly involved in the age in which they live, but in canonizing them, the Church does not canonize their political or social views. Even Joan of Arc was canonized for her virtues, and not for her voices; the Church does not pronounce on her political or military mission. The process of canonization bears on the interior life; it is necessary to sound the soul; what counts is uprightness, sincerity, humility and charity.

In these conditions we should not be astonished to see a new type of saint appear; but we should not be surprised either if we have to wait. Canonizations sometimes take a long time; people of the 16th and 17th century are still being canonized today, although others have been canonized twenty-five years after their death. When a saint has been involved in the disputes of his times, it is often necessary to wait until times have changed and passions have calmed. Msgr. Seipel, who was Chancellor of Austria after the first World War, and was assassinated, was taken for a man of God. Suppose he was worthy of canonization; it would still be necessary to wait until the events of the period no longer stirred up controversies.

What I have just written is a first impression. When we look at things more closely, various nuances begin to appear.

The history of the Church since the Middle Ages easily explains how the majority of saints are in religious orders. These orders were founded to emphasize sanctity, directly or indirectly, whether to be like the contemplative orders "schools of Our Lord's service" according to St. Benedict's expression, or like the active orders to organize a militia for the service of Christ. We can then expect that those who wish to consecrate themselves to God will enter the religious life. In modern times, with the Church, just as civil society, becoming more and more organized, specialization in the religious life has been accentuated, and with it has gone the orientation towards the religious life of all those who wanted to consecrate themselves to God. In addition, propaganda is constantly carried on in behalf of the religious life. For all those who wish to sanctify themselves, the religious life is presented as the best or even the only means. It is easy then to understand how holiness developed almost exclusively in this frame-work.

In criticisms often heard in conversation, reservations are formulated on the subject of the great number of canonizations of founders and foundresses of congregations and orders. We saw that they represented a large percentage of those that are canonized. Nevertheless, when we reflect on this situation,

there is less reason to be surprised. It is true that a founder or foundress is generally the object of a great devotion among the members of a community which owes him its existence, and it is true that the existence of a community which can work for canonization is a humanly favorable condition; but it is also true that founders are generally powerful religious personalities, that it is because of this that they took the initiative to start something new and have succeeded in it, and that the religious foundations which have given birth to important religious institutions generally reveal in their author a strong personality in God's service. But this again represents a formula of sanctity.

When we get the impression that they are following a path that has been all marked out, that they are following an easy way, we undergo an optical illusion which would disappear if we looked a little closer. Many of them were bold spirits and innovators and had to spend a great deal of energy to have their ideas accepted. It is true that these conceptions are accepted today, that sometimes they have even become outmoded and therefore no longer appear very daring; but to judge them properly, we must replace them in the context of their own times. A number of saints were even persecuted during most of their life; the contradictions against which they clashed have been far more lively than those met today by the priest-workers, for example, or the Little Brothers of Charles de Foucauld.

Also, when we look a little closer, we recognize that saints who have not belonged to a religious order are more numerous than first appeared. We already cited Blessed Anne-Marie Taïgi, whose husband was a servant; we may add, going through the centuries at random, St. Benedict-Joseph Labre; St. Roch, St. Isidor the laborer. All these are very humble people. St. Benedict-Joseph Labre was a beggar. Moreover he gives testimony of this idea I just mentioned, for he aspired to enter a monastery, made several attempts, never succeeded in staying, and ultimately consecrated his life to making pilgrimages while begging, for lack of having realized his vocation as he conceived it. St. Roch had a similar life in the 14th century; St. Isidore the laborer is a humble Spanish peasant of the 12th century and his life was completely ordinary: he married, was the father of a child who died very young, and cultivated his field.

At the other extreme of the social ladder, a series of kings and princes have been canonized. Among the laity, I do not find any saints except those who were of very humble life or of very high rank. There are no lay saints who were business men or who followed intellectual professions. On the other hand a certain number of saints who are considered as religious did not really have religious vocations. Let us simply mention the case of St. Catherine of Siena, the great Dominican mystic. She was only a secular member of the Third Order, and always lived in the world with her mother. In our time, no one would think of her as a religious. But in those days, tertiaries wore the habit, and despite the proverb, "The habit does not make the monk," the public attributed a religious character to anyone who wore the habit.

It is true that of those lay saints who are much discussed or who are the objects of much devotion, in general they are those claimed by a religious order, like Saint Catherine of Siena. But this is a human accident, and has no inevitable relationship with either the Church's judgment or with effective sanc-

tity. The saints of whom we speak are generally those who left behind them a work that even humanly speaking is important: doctors who have written, founders who are perpetuated by a religious order, or certain missionaries whose activity has been extraordinary. All this draws our attention, humanly speaking, but holiness itself is the life of God in the soul and this is not necessarily manifested by works that men can notice. Among canonized saints, there are many who are extremely unimportant from the human point of view.

Among those recently beatified, for example, we find Sister Bertilla Boscardin, of the Sisters of Saint Dorothy, an order caring for the sick. She was so stupid that all her superiors kept her working in the kitchen, not as cook, but simply to help out there. It was only extreme necessity which forced them to assign her to care for the sick, and she suddenly showed a genius for which no one was prepared. She was born in 1888 and died in 1922. She was beatified in 1952, going through the stages of beatification with extreme rapidity. Her case is far from being unique.

In reading all the lives of the saints, we become aware that the only condition of canonization is the intensity of charity. One need not have been intelligent, or have accomplished great works such as might attract attention; but it is necessary—and it is the only thing that is necessary—to have loved. Of course, this love must be Christian love, the love of Christ in us, for there are other loves...

We have noticed that as far as may be judged from recent canonizations, it would seem that a secular priest has to become a bishop or a pope in order to be canonized. The Curé d'Ars mentioned this long ago, and was distressed at the thought that a poor curate could not achieve holiness. We may then ask if priestly holiness is to be found only on the higher levels of the hierarchy, and if so, why.

Here again a more attentive observation shows that canonized secular priests are more numerous than it might appear at first sight, from Saint Yves, in 13th century Brittany, to Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Jean-Baptiste Vianney. It is true that Saint Vincent de Paul was a founder, like Saint Jean Bosco. If we replace the problem of holiness in its true context, we will remember that the saints are, as we said before, the strongest of religious personalities. When a secular priest is a saint, we should not be surprised that his virtue attracts attention, and recommends him as a bishop. When the Curé d'Ars was distressed that an ordinary parish priest could not become a saint, he proved that he was in error by the very testimony of his life. He should have gone back to the problem and asked: "When a priest is a saint, how should it not be normal that he become a bishop?" In fact, since the 16th century, when the secular clergy was reorganized, we see holy bishops emerge from the secular clergy, like Saint Charles Borromeo and Saint Francis de Sales. There are other canonizations of secular priests, like Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint John Bosco, and this is still quite natural.

When we see the direction of canonizations in this way, we come to the conclusion that canonization is reserved for strong religious personalities, whatever be the manner in which they are expressed, and that the religious person-

ality is attracted by certain privileged forms of life. If, as a consequence of particular circumstances, these forms of life change, we shall see a new type of saint, from the point of view of his insertion in the world.

IN order to finish this study of canonized sanctity, we should be able to distinguish between conformist and non-conformist attitudes among saints.

Fifteen years ago Mounier proposed the notion of "the established disorder"—an idea that was then new, but rich in signification. We know that conservative minds always bless existing institutions and usages with the name of the "established order," thereby throwing suspicion on those who wish to change this order. Mounier made the observation that the existing situation may be a state of disorder to which minds may become attached because they become accustomed to it, or simply because they believe that it is impossible to change it. A man would then be confronted with an established disorder which he could not accept. In this Mounier is returning to the attitude of medieval theologians on the subject of the right to revolt, when they consider that the ruler who governs his people in his own interest instead of seeking the common good, is violating order, and is therefore in revolt against the law; the people, by their revolt, would be simply defending order against the man who violated it. The one in revolt is the man who violated order, and the defender of order is the one who re-establishes it.

But the majority of men are incapable of distinguishing between order and the established disorder. They are insufficiently informed and their intelligence is not lively enough. In particular, they lack the imagination necessary to figure out what could take the place of the existing situation, and hence the present situation appears to be necessary to them. That is why, in social affairs, they limit themselves to an attitude which gives expression to various formulas of resignation: "A bird in the hand . . .", or "The best is the enemy of the good." When they are, in addition, holy men who desire to lead a wholly Christian life, they try to find the virtuous formula even within the false order of society, which they would not dream of questioning.

Most saints, therefore, accept this established disorder; because if they all have a strongly Christian personality, the force of their personality hardly shows itself except in their personal lives. Only a small number of them are non-conformists, that is, those who react more or less vigorously against the established disorder, but these are often the greatest saints.

A very pure example of the conformist saint was recently given by Alexander Masseron in a book on Saint Yves which is more of an official record than a biography. By bringing together citations from the canonization trial, Masseron makes a unity of the characteristic features of the saint's appearance with a clarity that no story could have achieved. Saint Yves was a secular priest, an official of the bishop of Treguier, in charge of a diocesan tribunal at a time (13th century) when ecclesiastical justice was extremely important. His parents were nobles and he had inherited a small chateau where he lived till the end of his life; he held on to his fortune and he always had servants. He practiced great mortifications, gave alms generously, fed the poor at his table and housed

them in his chateau; but if he was able to give alms, it was because he kept his property and apparently did not think of giving it up. Among other stories, one is told of a time he went to stay in a Parish of which he was curate; since the room he was given only had one bed, he had his servant sleep in the bed and he slept on the floor. This was indeed mortification, but it did not prevent him from having a servant and from remaining the master who would decide who would sleep in the bed.

In accordance with the practice of the time, he did not receive any remuneration for his function as a diocesan official; he was given a living in a nearby parish—that is, he received the revenues of the parish without filling the functions of curate. Here is a clear example of the established disorder. Saint Yves does not think of changing the custom and remains in his chateau; the parish must have been placed in the hands of a poor priest who would exercise the ministry there, but this is not mentioned in the canonization proceedings. The only other alternative would be even worse, for if there were no resident priest, the parishioners were purely and simply abandoned. In any case, no one found fault with anything in the situation. The witness at the trial explained with admiration that from time to time he went into his parish to instruct the faithful and visit the sick, and the theologians who conducted the questioning say nothing to allow us to suspect that they found this insufficient for a curate that is being presented as a saint. But the non-residence of priests and bishops was one of the great evils of the Church at that time.

Another example of the conformist saint was Francis de Sales. The son of a lord, he always lived among those of his class. With people of more modest station he was kind and condescending, but he did not react in any way against class differences as they existed in his time. We could multiply examples of this kind, but those that I have given are clear enough.

Let us look now at some saints who rejected the established disorder.

Saint Francis of Assisi saw that wealth was corrupting the Church; he made poverty the foundation of the life that he adopted and proposed to those who wished to join with him. Let us note right away that the way in which saints reject the established order is to refuse to be associated with it. They construct something along-side, but they destroy nothing; Saint Francis of Assisi does not demand that monasteries be burned and bishops turned out.

Saint Vincent de Paul, named curate of Clichy in conditions similar to those of Saint Yves, installed himself in the parish and immediately undertook the construction of a church, that is, he consecrated himself to his parish. . . . Saint Ignatius Loyola, founding the Society of Jesus, decided that religious could not accept ecclesiastical honors. This meant especially that they could not become bishops, because in those times, the episcopacy was in such a state of disorder that becoming a bishop seemed to make it particularly difficult to be a good priest. He also did not destroy anything, but built up something else.

We could find other examples. Many founders were non-conformists. The gentle Saint Francis de Sales himself showed a certain non-conformist spirit in his foundation of the Visitation, and he inaugurated a new spirituality which was destined to have a transforming influence. But today problems are presented which seem altogether new.

When we observe those saints who reacted against the established disorder, we see that it was always a question of disorder within the Church. Today, when we speak of the established disorder, we tend to be thinking of a disorder in secular society. As a consequence of the disappearance of Christendom, and with it, of the sacral society, Christianity has a role to play in the world as a whole, which is non-Christian. In each country Catholics have to manifest the light of their Christian faith, and project it on all the problems of living men, and they have the same role on the international level. The teaching of the Popés gives us the example in this area.

But this situation presents completely different problems than those that were formerly encountered. Certainly in the Christian society of long ago there were numerous charitable initiatives whose purpose was temporal charity, from hospitals and orphanages to confraternities for the construction of bridges. What seems new is the action that is taken in regard to institutions.

This is due, on one hand, to the parliamentary regime which has made the State the good of all, and gives to every citizen the right and the means of acting on it. A parliamentary regime produces an unprecedented political effervescence, which would disappear with the regime. In the "popular democracies," the citizen no longer concerns himself to act on institutions; he accepts them; he cannot criticize them, and he is required to have confidence in them and in the men who exercise power.

In addition, the action on institutions has an unprecedented importance in our time because contemporary civilization presents the means of establishing institutions which transform the life of citizens far more than could any private action. We act a great deal more efficaciously against pauperism by establishing homes for the aged, a system of family allocations, insurance against accidents at work, unemployment insurance, etc., than by distributing alms. In the time of Saint Vincent de Paul, there was no question of establishing institutions of this kind; but we can accomplish these things only by action in the secular world in collaboration with non-Christians; this action requires, therefore, that a position be taken in the realm of the temporal.

We do this in two ways, either by directly sharing the situation, in certain zones that have been particularly dechristianized—as do those who become workers in order to live among workers, or by joining various movements of protest. The two forms of Christian presence meet, because when a man integrates himself with an environment, he inevitably adopts its attitudes and participates in the movements that are being developed in it.

All the confrontations with the different aspects of holiness lead us back constantly to the same problem, that of integration with the secular order. Since the saint is above all a religious personality, a man of God, preoccupied with God in everything, we may ask ourselves if it is conceivable that he plunge himself into the realm of the temporal for itself; it is not the temporal as such which solicits his attention. If he integrates himself with the temporal, it must be for some other reason. Therefore he is not completely integrated with the temporal, for the men of his environment with whom he appears to be associated do not share his concerns.

WHATEVER human changes take place, we can be sure that the saint will always remain the man of God. When the Church starts a canonization trial, the question that she will always ask is whether the Christian whose life is being examined was entirely dedicated to God. Accordingly, if a saint is integrated with the temporal world, it will be for non-temporal motives. May we then conclude immediately that integration with the temporal will never represent the habitual style of holiness?

In this respect, certain movements of today require some clarification. In reaction against a former tendency to supernatural utilitarianism which subordinated the corporal works of mercy to some tangible spiritual fruit—such as we meet among those who would give material help to the poor only if they went to Mass—some claim not only that charity must be shown to all men, but that it ought to be made a point of honor to avoid every appearance of making propaganda for religion. We ought not only to avoid trying to convert at any price and by any means, but we should have a positive will not to convert...

This can obviously be explained only as a reaction against the earlier attitude. The Christian who is convinced that the great happiness for man is to be a Christian, necessarily wishes this happiness for all men. It is true that there has existed in the past and still exists today a naive arrogance among some Christians, who believe themselves to be superior beings because they are Christians, although faith is for them truly a gratuitous gift which they can in no way have merited. It is also true that such people have very naive conceptions in regard to the conditions of conversion, and that our ideas have greatly developed in this regard. But all this does not change the fact that we can hardly be Christians without being convinced that our faith is the greatest of all treasures and that charity is the greatest virtue.

The saint, therefore, is the Christian in whom charity manifests itself in the purest manner, and charity is the love that God bears the world. It is the love that God has revealed to men through Christ, brought also by Christ into conditions in which it lives in each of those who adhere to Christ. It is, therefore, not just any love; it is a love which affects souls and the conditions of spiritual development. It is not brought to temporal goods except in a subordinate manner, insofar as certain temporal goods are the conditions of spiritual good. But all temporal goods are not conditions of spiritual good; many are even obstacles...

Christian love will be concerned with the temporal order, therefore, but in order to place it at the service of the spiritual, and this puts it in radical opposition with many non-Christian movements with which they may be occasionally united in demanding certain temporal reforms.

This also shows the great importance of today's movements of conjugal and professional spirituality, for far from being an integration of the spiritual to the temporal, they seek to integrate the temporal with the spiritual, the Christian problem *par excellence*; that is, they are trying to assert the value of the manner in which the temporal can and ought to be placed in the service of the spiritual.

When we begin to take this direction, we recognize that the activities that are called "religious" have often included a large area of the secular or the temporal, and we ask ourselves if the habit worn by the agent is sufficient to change the character of the action. We are compelled to set this up as a principle, when we say that since the religious is consecrated to God, his every activity becomes a consecrated activity. But today we recognize that Baptism is a sacrament and that therefore it too is a consecration to God, and so is marriage. Every Christian is a consecrated being and it is indeed in this way that Saint Paul understood the situation.

When we analyze the activities of religious, therefore, we find a great number of secular activities. Some religious have been cooks and porters; others teach, give instruction in reading and writing and arithmetic. If my memory is correct, Saint John Bosco, who is perhaps the greatest saint of the 19th century, has published manuals of arithmetic.

Taken in themselves, these activities are as secular as the work of a laboring man or white-collar worker. We can imagine them as being performed in the world and we can consider it preferable to devote ourselves to the service of God without joining a religious order. The whole point is that these activities should be the expression of Christ's charity. The spiritual development of our time leads us to envisage a spiritual purification of the whole of Christian life and to emphasize that charity can be developed in every state of life, and that every Christian is therefore called to the pursuit of sanctity. Sanctity itself has not changed; the saint is and will always be the man of God; but it seems that God may more freely penetrate the whole of life. Here as in other domains, we have the impression that we are reaching a state of maturity in Christianity, or more precisely that it is only today that we are reaching the fullness of Christianity.

Translated by JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN

BYZANTINE THEOCRACY AND THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

ALEXANDER SCHMEMANN

THE problem of the relation between Church and State is only the most concrete expression of the general problem of the relation between Christianity and the world. Any delimitation of their respective spheres, and any attempt to define the way in which they can exist side by side, necessarily presupposes a Christian conception of the State, and this in turn depends on how Christians envisage the Church's task in the world.

"In the world but not of the world" (Diognetus, VI). The whole history of the Church is determined by the practical realization of this fundamental paradox, which confronts every fresh generation of Christians with the same urgent question. But although each generation is called to make a tremendous effort, the answer itself will never be entirely new, for the essence of the Church's life consists in, constantly re-interpreting the same, eternal tradition in terms of contemporary thought. "*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*" And in those matters which are not related to Creed, nor to "the truths of the faith," but to its position in the human State, and in history, the Church's tradition is expressed not only in symbols and texts, but in the events of its own history. That is why the study and understanding of these facts, and their religious evaluation, are so important for the "catholic" (universal) consciousness of the Church. The history of the Church does not consist merely in events which are over and done with, and which need no longer be considered. Its history consists above all in the Church's realization of its own tradition, or better still, of its *living* Tradition with which we are bound up when seeking our own course.

For the Orthodox Church the central "fact" of its past, which still dominates its destiny, is undoubtedly the *Byzantine period* of Church history, and what may be generally described as Byzantinism. No one would deny that Byzantinism still today constitutes in some sense the historical form and expression of Orthodoxy, and this applies just as much to its theology as to its liturgy, to its canonical tradition as to its spirituality. The Orthodox Church today is still living according to a "canon" which was completed in its present form at Byzantium; its historical tradition is primarily a Byzantine tradition. The exact understanding and evaluation of this Byzantine heritage is therefore the essential starting-point in Orthodox thinking, a pre-condition for all theological or practical efforts to discover an authentically Orthodox answer to the many problems facing the Orthodox Church today. It is an indisputable fact that

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one of the basic elements of Byzantinism was precisely the close alliance between Church and State. It is therefore impossible to study this period and to understand its significance for contemporary Orthodoxy without having first considered the idea of Byzantine theocracy. Is this idea the historical sin of Orthodoxy, the source of all its weaknesses and its decadence (as some Orthodox Christians think today)? Or is it, on the contrary, in spite of all its faults and all its historic relativity, the natural expression of Orthodoxy which is—according to a modern Russian theologian—"theocratic to the same extent that it is Orthodox"? In any case it is vitally essential to answer these questions or in any case to formulate them in a new way, for they touch upon the sore points of the Orthodox world today.

BUT the religious meaning of Byzantine theocracy can only be determined by an exact knowledge of what that theocracy really was. That is where we encounter at first difficulty. For the historical debate is still going on, concerning the real character of this Byzantine alliance between Church and State. Byzantine theocracy always remains a sort of "crux interpretum" and the definitions suggested by historians are often diametrically opposed. Some historians, especially in the West, maintain that the inherent characteristic of Theocracy was what they call Caesaropapism, i.e., a system in which (according to the Catholic historian M. Jugie) "the State regards itself as an *absolute* power, both in sacred and profane matters, both in spiritual and in temporal life, ignores in practice the distinction between civic and spiritual power, or at least subordinates the latter to the former." But other historians, such as G. Vernadsky, prefer to regard Byzantium as an original system of relationships between Church and State forming a "single body"—a Church-state crowned with supreme and indivisible power, the "diarchy" of the Basileus and the Patriarch.

We are not interested here in the divergences between these different conceptions of Byzantinism, but rather in what constitutes their common basis; these underlying assumptions are the crucial problem. It is significant that the very people who regret Caesaropapism as a formulation of Byzantinism not only do not deny, but actually affirm some sort of organic, inherent fusion between the Byzantine Church and State. The divergences are only concerned fundamentally with the relationship between two *powers*—but within this unique organism. In short, it is not a question of the relationship between Church and State as such, but between the civil power and the spiritual power, the former personified by the Emperor and the latter by the Patriarch. What appears serious to us is precisely the possibility of the Church's consenting to a fusion of this kind; and that is why the existence of the Church constitutes the vital centre of the problem, from the Orthodox point of view.

For it must not be forgotten that this problem of relationship with the State did not confront the Christian conscience for the first time at Byzantium and after Constantine. It had done so before during the previous conflict between the Empire and Christianity which went on for three centuries, and the solution found then continued to form the permanent basis of the Christian tradition. The opposition between the Church and the world is undoubtedly the essential element in Early Christianity. And we must stress the fact

that this opposition is not only of a moral or psychological nature, but is above all *metaphysical*. The Church is not of this world; between the Church and the world a great gulf is fixed, which it is impossible to bridge, a difference of nature and not merely of ideology or of belief. Entering the Church (as all the rites of baptism bear witness) has always meant dying in order to be re-born—"PALINGENESTHAI"—into the life which is in its essence, quite new and different from the life of the world. Hence, renouncing the world does not mean merely renouncing the evil which is in the world; it means a "conversion"—the passage from one life to another. In this sense Christianity is not a doctrine which is "valid" for the world; the Church is primarily and exclusively the "*corpus christianum*," "the new people" which is a "*genus tertium*" for the world. Outside the Church Christianity "does not apply" and is not realized. But this renunciation (here is the important point) is paradoxical. Although the Church is not of this world (being foreign to the world by its very nature) it still exists in the world, and living in the world is its essential function, just as the salvation of the world is its only task. Christians are not of the world; but within it they form a new people, constituted through the sacramental grace of Baptism. This paradox places the Church in a dual relationship with the world. This complete renunciation, this meta-physical separation is balanced, on another plane, by an equally complete acceptance of the world and an orientation towards it.

It is, therefore, this ecclesiology, this very nature of the Church, which defines its attitude towards the State. The State belongs entirely to the world, and this fact determines once and for all its position in the Christian world view. The loyalty of the Early Christians to the Roman Empire which persecuted them has often been stressed. This loyalty is explained by the fact that "to the minds of the Early Christians, the Roman Empire formed part of this present world, in which the Church was called upon to live, and to which they must therefore adapt themselves, until God brought this world to an end and established His Kingdom" (M. Goguel). The struggle with the Empire does not therefore mean a negation or a condemnation of the State as such. As O. Cullmann writes: "The Early Christian community only protests against the State when the disciple of Christ is summoned to recognize the Emperor as his divine KYRIOS and is forbidden to confess that Jesus Christ is his sole KYRIOS." Moreover the Early Christian community proved extremely loyal to the Roman State; for where that State accomplishes its own special function, it is really good."

The conflict only begins, therefore, when the State attacks the essence of the Church, by asking it to deny its own nature. Christians oppose the State, not in the name of a Christian ideal of the State which they oppose to a "non-Christian" State, but in the name of Christ, "*pro nomen ipsum*," Whose name they are ordered to betray. This is clearly shown in the attitude of the Early Christians in face of persecution. They regarded persecution as the natural consequence of the unbridgeable difference between themselves and the world (in Christ's own words: "If the world hate you . . . it is because ye are not of the world"); martyrdom, and even the desire for martyrdom, was one of the norms of the Christian life. But this did not prevent these same Christians from

protesting—on another plane—against persecution and proclaiming themselves, in all sincerity, to be the most loyal citizens of the Empire.

We recall these facts here, although they are well known, because in our opinion they are of primary importance for the understanding of Byzantinism. This early tradition brings out clearly that the Church's relations with the State were defined mainly in accordance with its own ecclesiological nature. In this sense any kind of State is "acceptable" to Christians, provided that the Church can retain its own nature and remain loyal to its mission in the world. The study of Byzantinism must be based on these given facts, and the only real means of understanding what Byzantine theocracy represented for the Church is to rediscover the link which bound them together in an organic unity—instead of contrasting the "free" Church of early times with the enslaved Church of Byzantium.

THIS brings us to a primary principle of method: we must always distinguish between the attitude of the State to the Church, and the attitude of the Church towards the State. The failure to distinguish between them is the cause of one of the chief errors in current judgments on Byzantium. The result is that, owing to the alleged fusion of Empire and Church, the conception held by the spokesmen of the Empire is attributed to the Church, and is considered as representing the Church's authentic tradition. But the whole historical perspective is thereby distorted, for there were in fact two quite independent chains of ideas in Byzantinism, and we must be able to distinguish between them in spite of their influence on one another.

Byzantium is often defined as "The Christianized Roman Empire." But in the first place we must ask ourselves what this "Christianization" of the Empire could mean. For if the Church (the only place in which Christianity is "realized") and the world (to which the Empire belongs) belong to two incompatible orders, we must discover what divergent interpretation they gave to the paradoxical connection between themselves.

We know in the first place that this Christianization of the Empire changed practically nothing in its essence in its "State consciousness." The history of Byzantium is "a continuation of Roman history, just as the Byzantine State is a development of the old Roman Empire" (Ostrogorsky). The Constantinian peace gave no cause for any political or social crisis, and from this point of view the first Christian emperor continued the work of the last persecutor of Christianity. In the same way the whole political and social evolution of Byzantium originates rather in the reforms of Diocletian than in the conversion of Constantine. The Christianization of the Empire originally meant nothing but a change in its official religion, the replacement of pagan "theology." The victory of Christianity did not result in a new Empire with a new "State consciousness"; this victory consisted in changing the religious doctrine of the Empire, which nevertheless remained quite unchanged in itself. This continuity of the Roman tradition—the Roman conception of State—explains the fact that it was unnecessary for Christianity to seek for a special, new position in the State; it occupied the position left vacant by the defeat of paganism in the Roman Empire.

This also explains why this process was organic, and not critical, in character. It did not imply any re-evaluation of the nature of the Empire, which remained intact. The Empire was already *theocratic*. By theocracy we mean, in this case, the organic link between the State and its religion, the religious basis of the State itself, which is the common character of all the States of antiquity. And this theocratic nature of the Empire was the main cause, if not the only one, of its conflict with Christianity. Rome was living "sub auspiciis deorum" and it was in the name of its gods that it condemned Christian "atheism." The tragic paradox of this conflict lay in the fact that the Christians, while "accepting" the Empire, could not "accept" its gods; but these gods were inseparable from the Empire and formed its essential religious basis. Thus this conflict, that Christian apologists sometimes used to describe as a "misunderstanding," was on the contrary in the logic of things and therefore inevitable; if the Empire had not persecuted the Christians it would thereby have abjured its own faith. The only other solution possible was the victory of Christianity, i.e. the defeat of the Empire (but purely in the religious sense) in its adoption of Christianity as a State religion.

In this sense the conversion of Constantine—in spite of its spontaneous character—became part of the inevitable development of the mentality of the Empire itself. It is true that Constantine tried to mitigate the victory by a compromise. But we must not misunderstand the meaning of this "freedom of worship" proclaimed by him in his Edict of Milan. It certainly did not mean that the State abandoned its theocratic nature, and assumed an attitude of indifference or neutrality towards religion. Constantine himself is perhaps one of the most typical representatives of this theocratic mentality of the Empire. In fact, this freedom was the final expression of pagan theocracy. For although paganism, especially in the syncretist form which characterized it in the IVth century, might admit theologically that divine worship might assume different forms, Christianity categorically rejected such diversity. Even if the compromise had been acceptable for the Empire, it could not possibly be acceptable to Christians. Hence, from the moment when Constantine was converted, the gods of the Empire were doomed to disappear. As soon as the ruler of the Empire became a Christian, he had to accept the logic of his new religion; and the only quarrel which Christianity had with the State was its *false* religion. Hence, from the time of Constantine onwards, the religious evolution of the Empire up to the Edict of Theodosius (381) was only the natural consequence of this first Christian victory, which took place in the Emperor's soul on the day of the battle of Ponte-Milvio, and which was eventually to spread all over the Empire.

On the one hand the logic of the Empire, its theocratic nature, demanded an *official* religion, a religious sanction; on the other hand the Christian logic admitted *one* religion only, and *one* God as Lord of heaven and earth. By forcing all his subjects to embrace Christianity, and forbidding pagan rites, the Emperor Theodosius seized the one point where these two chains of ideas intersected, and thus consecrated the transformation of pagan theocracy into Christian theocracy.

To the Church the Christianization of the Empire could only mean its official acceptance of the Christian doctrine. For Christian doctrine is not the

same thing as Christianity. Christianity means the Church, a sacramental body with its own life and its own theology... i.e. its own conception of God. The Empire may recognise Christianity, and may force its subjects to do so; but the Empire cannot become a Church, whose life is mystical and sacramental. The world may submit to the Christian truth—and to Christianity its own victory meant that above all—the victory of Light over the darkness of idolatry. But submission to the Truth is only realised and only becomes salutary in the life given by the Church. This sacramental, almost "biological" conception of the Church enables us to understand what it meant by the conversion of the Empire. The Empire accepted the doctrine of the Church as its basis and its religious sanction; but the same metaphysical difference remained between the Church and the Empire, inasmuch as the essential categories of the world and the Church remained.

This does not mean that there was no change in the attitude of Christians towards the Empire; nor does it mean that no Christian ferment was introduced into its institutions and its life. But it should be emphasised that the Church regarded the specifically Christian value of the Empire after its conversion as a matter of official doctrine, rather than as one of ethics. For ethics are inseparable from grace, and grace can only be obtained in and through the Church. The world and the Empire are subject to the *law*, not to grace. And the Church can give them this law; it is the doctrine formulated by the Church itself. Just as in the past the only thing that the Church had demanded of the pagan Empire was the right, not to call Caesar its "Kyrios," so now the only thing that the Church demanded of the Christian Empire was the right to be *orthodox*, i.e. to remain true to its doctrine. But the Church was glad to place itself and its faith under the protection of the Empire, thus assigning it to the sacred mission of being the home of the Church on earth (POLITEUMA). The Empire is transformed from an enemy and an idolater into an ally, and is sanctified by this alliance. From now on the Empire and the Church had the same KYRIOS and believed in the same Truth. Their vocations were in a way complementary; but inasmuch as the Empire remained the Empire, it was separated from the Church by the same metaphysical gulf, and any organic fusion remained impossible.

BYZANTIUM has often been accused of having been a merely nominal Christian State, which beneath Christian terminology retained its pagan nature and all its political and social deficiencies, instead of transforming them in accordance with Christian principles. Still more frequently Byzantium has been accused of not reacting against the deficiencies, of not having actively furthered the building of a Christian temporal order, of making compromises with slavery, social injustice, etc., instead of condemning them outright. From the standpoint of modern social ethics (which are undoubtedly based on Christian ideas) it may be admitted that many aspects of the Byzantine Empire must be condemned. But it is false—even from the purely historical point of view—to judge Byzantium and the Byzantine Church in accordance with criteria with which they were quite unacquainted. The task of working out a system of social or political ethics for the use of the world (with which people sometimes identify Chris-

tianity nowadays) was not, and could not be, the purpose of the Byzantine Church, and we have endeavoured to show why. At the time the Church could only regard the conversion of the world and the State as nominal, in a sense; but even so, that conversion represented an enormous victory. It implied the submission of the State to the ultimate values—which had hitherto been inherent only in the Church and represented its greatest achievement in the world. It meant that the State became the home of the Church, its earthly habitat, the natural receptacle for what is only given in the supra-natural reality of its mystical life.

Thus the two logics found their common ground, and Church and state found the basis of their alliance in Orthodoxy—in the doctrine of the Catholic Church which the Empire adopted as its official religion. And it is significant that the Justinian Code (the outstanding Code of the Christian Empire, which is the culminating-point of the whole evolution of Roman Law) opens with the Church's Symbol of Faith. It is also the symbol of Byzantine theocracy.

As we have said, the position of Christianity in the Empire was determined by the theocratic nature of the Empire. There was a distinct difference between Christianity and the official paganism which had preceded it. Official paganism, by its very nature, was an inherent part of the State, whereas Christianity existed in the form of a Church, an organ different from the State in nature and in origin. But when the Empire had adopted Christianity as its own religion and had introduced it into its own State consciousness, it still continued—because of its theocratic constitution—to regard Christianity in the same manner as it had regarded its former religions. The pagan Emperor was the High Priest of the official religious ceremonies, and by acting as such emphasized the essentially political and national function of the state religion. It is clear that, from the very outset, the Christianised Empire drew a distinction between the power of the Emperor and the power of the Priest, the *Imperium* and the *Sacerdotium*. However, inasmuch as Christianity was the official doctrine of the State—and just because it became so as a result of the Empire logic and of the necessities inherent in the Empire—it preserved in the eyes of the Empire the same utilitarian character and continued to fulfil the same political function as the official religion had always done.

The clearest proof of this continuity in the attitude of the Empire is the "imperial" art of Christian Byzantium, on which an excellent book has recently been written by Professor A. Grabar. In the centuries which followed the conversion of the Empire, this art preserved intact the iconographic form and inspiration which it had in the third century. It was still dominated by the "triumphal cycle," and amid this glorification of the Empire and its invincibility, due to the special protection of God, its conversion to Christianity was shown only by the new "*labarum*" (the Cross or monogram of Constantine) which took the place of the old pagan standard ("*vexillum*") without changing in any way the general iconographic design. This clearly shows that for the Empire its new religion held the same significance and the same function as the old one—that of ensuring the "triumph" of the Empire or (inverting the mediaeval order) of providing a "religious arm" for the State. The way in which the Emperors continually meddled in Church affairs is thus explained by the

persistence of this old Roman tradition, even after the conversion of the Empire. In this sense it is legitimate to define the attitude of the Emperors during the whole period of Early Byzantinism as *Caesaro-Papist*, with just one reservation—that they had no deliberate, conscious intention to distort Christianity or to enslave it, but to utilize it in a way quite natural within the traditional framework of Roman theocracy.

But it would be wrong to think that the Church had accepted this natural *Caesaro-Papism* of the Empire just as it stood, and made it part of its own self-consciousness. The whole interest of this first period of Byzantium lies in the real conflict between the two logics and in the slow transformation of the self-consciousness of the State through the influence of its new religion.

It cannot be denied that the conversion of the Empire resulted in the absorption of the Church into the State, its increasing adaptation to the administrative imperial system. But there again it is a question of understanding the real meaning, and the limits of this absorption. For the very nature of the Church imparts a dual character to its external organisation. On the one hand the Church is the visible expression and manifestation of the sacramental structure of the body of Christ; so that the division of the hierarchy into three orders is an eternal and unchangeable element of the Church. But on the other hand its organisation expresses its own permanent adaptation to the world, the essentially historic character of the Church's mission, its involvement in human history. The Early Church, which had been ignored and persecuted by the State, had been able to retain its freedom in matters concerning its own external organisation. But the Byzantine Church, which was recognised and legalised by the State, was naturally obliged to adapt itself to the State, since all the members of the Church were subjects of that State. Thus in the historical and incidental sphere of the territorial demarcation of the dioceses, their grouping and their jurisdiction, the Church acted "in agreement" with the State (according to a canonical text). The most typical example of this "agreement" was the rapid promotion of the episcopal see of Constantinople to the rank of Ecumenical Patriarchate, because (according to another canon) Constantinople was "the city of the Emperor and of the Senate." If the Church received rights which it had not had before, the State on the other hand also acquired new rights at the hands of the Church.

But this administrative alignment should not make us forget that the Church regarded the boundary between itself and the world not as an external, juridical boundary, but primarily as a metaphysical one, and that this distinction was not in any way affected, no matter how far this administrative alignment might go. Orthodox ecclesiology has always been primarily mystical and sacramental, and if it neglected the other aspect of the Church (its juridical and administrative side—an accusation often brought against it by Roman Catholic theologians) the reason was that during the whole of the theocratic period it more or less deliberately assigned the government of the Church to the Christian State, whose mission (in the eyes of the Church) consisted precisely in preserving its true nature unchanged.

In order to understand the paradoxical nature of its relations with the State, there is no better example than the prodigious growth of monachism,

which coincided with the Christianization of the Roman "OIKUMENE." "The earthly State is becoming Christian," writes Professor Florovsky, "but the anti-thesis remains... The world is becoming Christian, and it is this Christian world, this Christian Empire, from which Christians are beginning to flee... Monachism is the Church in its aspect as essentially "different" from the world, as a new *life* which is not of this world. The Christian world becomes polarised, Christian history developed into a metaphysical tension between the Empire and the Desert." But once again this tension was not a negation. Monachism was not a movement against the Empire, since it very soon took root in the very heart of the imperial cities; it was only the living witness, the material expression of the fundamental incompatibility of Christianity and the world, and of the essential difference between them. And it is highly significant that in this period when the Church was more closely linked with the State than any other time, this Golden Age of its alliance with the world, the whole Orthodox Church should have donned the garment of monasticism (so to speak) by adopting the liturgy, the spirituality and the whole tradition of monasticism as its own tradition, thereby recognising in monasticism what it previously recognised in martyrdom—the real expression and norm of the Christian life.

Thus the first period of Byzantinism is characterised, in a somewhat paradoxical way, by the co-existence of two systems, between which no balance has yet been found; the natural Caesaro-Papism of the State (regarding Christianity from the old theocratic point of view) and on the other hand the Church which preserves intact its own inner life, in spite of being an established institution and part of the State.

But this co-existence could not last forever. A fresh conflict began, less spectacular than the first, but no less important for the Church. The two logics confronted one another once again, and finally arrived at a new synthesis. The cause of the first conflict—that with the pagan Empire—was essentially theological, for the Church was struggling against a false religion. And in the same way the cause of this new conflict—with the Christian Empire this time—was equally theological, because their alliance was based on Orthodoxy. Moreover, this alliance coincided with the outbreak of great dogmatic crises within the Church, crises of Orthodoxy itself, which had to be preserved from heresies and schisms. For over a century the mind of the Church was born in this endeavour to find formulas adequate to express its experience. But by the very nature of its "doctrinal" alliance with the Church, the Empire was also involved in the crises. For since the essential task of the Empire (in the eyes of the Church) consisted in being Orthodox, in protecting the true faith, the Church could not tolerate any sort of indifference, still less any kind of heresy. In the eyes of the Church, an Emperor who was a heretic, an Empire which was heretical, would have been a *contradictio in adjecto*, and the defeat of everything that the Peace of Constantine had meant to the Church.

But this reveals the whole difference between the two logics and their complete incompatibility. For the Church the most important thing was the question of Orthodoxy; but for the Empire what mattered most was the historical aspect of this crisis, its immediate practical consequences. The theological disputes encouraged political and racial passions, and gave expression to the na-

tionalisms latent within the heterogeneous provinces of the Empire. The unity of the Empire itself was sometimes endangered. The religious crisis—because it was the religion of the State—was bound to assume the nature of a political crisis. That is why all the efforts of the Empire, unlike those of the Church, were directed less towards a disinterested loyalty to Orthodoxy than towards religious peace, even if this could only be attained at the price of a compromise, or of vague, ambiguous dogmatic formulas.

Thus the whole religious policy of the Empire, from Constantine to Heraclius, from Arianism to Iconoclasm, the whole of this utilitarian Caesaro-Papism, was only the practical expression of these political and practical anxieties, of this necessity of finding compromises. And at first the Church only defended itself against this policy by a passive loyalty to the Truth—a loyalty which was sealed more than once by the blood of the martyrs and the exile of the confessors.

This conflict, which as we have seen was inherent in the nature of the alliance itself, reached its decisive and culminating point in the crisis of the Iconoclasts. This crisis finally revealed, in its full depth, the incompatibility between the two logics and the precarious nature of their coexistence. The iconoclastic Emperors carried to extremes what had been implied in the previous policy of the Empire. Their purpose was not to substitute some sort of compromise for the exclusive Orthodoxy of the Church, but themselves to usurp the Church's position in the definition of Orthodoxy, by transforming the Church into a mere branch of the State. "*Imperator sum et Sacerdos*"—these words, even if they were not uttered by Leo III, well express the culmination of Caesaro-Papism within the Empire, as revealed in the Iconoclast crisis. It is quite significant that the assault on the icons was accompanied in some places by an intense struggle against monasticism—that witness to the inviolable autonomy of the Church. And the Byzantine monks were the first to impart real meaning to the struggle, by centering their resistance around the words of another martyr, who was also the victim of Caesaro-Papism: "*ME DEIN BASILEIA PERI PISTEOS LOGON POIESTHAI*" (it is not the function of the Empire to make decisions on matters of faith). The passive resistance of the previous centuries now became an active resistance. The synthesis of Justinian fell to pieces; but this breakdown marked the final stage in the long and painful evolution of Byzantine theocracy.

ALL THE Byzantine historians agree in recognising that, in the quarrel about the use of images, the Church was really defending its own liberty and independence. But they misinterpret very curiously the issue of this struggle, by affirming that, although the Church triumphed on the doctrinal plane, it was made definitely subservient to the State, and became nothing more than a "Department of State" (to quote Harnack's expression). But to us the Church's victory over Iconoclasm marks the definite triumph of the Church's logic over the logic of the Empire, the triumph of the Christian conception of theocracy over Roman Caesaro-Papism. It is perfectly true that the integration of Church and Empire, and the power of the State over the Church, were far greater after

the Iconoclastic outbreak than they had ever been before. The Church's existence became almost entirely identical with that of the Empire. But this was not the consequence of the Church's defeat, but of a metamorphosis within the State, a deep change in its conception of its own nature. And that was the last and greatest victory of the Church over the Empire. The nature of the Empire did not change, nor did its political and social structure; the metamorphosis occurred in the State's conception of its official religion, and of the function and value of that religion to the Empire. According to the ancient Roman tradition which survived long after the conversion of the Empire, the state religion only existed as a function of the state and ensured peace and victory. But now the whole situation was reversed: the Empire placed itself at the service of its religion; the existence of the Empire derived meaning only insofar as it was of service to Christianity.

The "triumphal cycle" of imperial art was now superseded by the new iconographic design representing "the Emperor before Christ" (as Grabar defines it), which no longer glorifies the *victory* of the Empire, but its piety and its loyalty to Christ. For victory itself is primarily God's victory, just as war is only the defence of Christ's. "POLITEUMA." The best expression of this transformation of the self-consciousness of the State is found in the *Epanagoge*—a collection of laws made at the end of the IXth century, which continued to be the real theocratic constitution of the Empire as long as the Empire lasted. According to these facts, "the Emperor must *above all* excel in orthodoxy and piety, know the dogmas concerning the Holy Trinity and the definitions relating to salvation through the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is still more revealing in the *Epanagoge* is the constant and deliberate parallelism in the definitions of the power of the Emperor and the power of the Patriarch. The Emperor and the Patriarch are "the most important and essential elements in the State" (TES POLITEIAS). This has often led scholars to conclude that there was an organic and definite fusion of Church and State, so that they formed one single sacred organism. But in our opinion this text can only be really understood in the light of transformation in the self-consciousness of the State. For the idea expressed in this passage is precisely the new mentality of the Empire, and not the mentality of the Church. In addition to his ecclesiastical functions, which are defined by the very nature of the Church, the Patriarch received special functions in the Empire, of which he becomes "a part" or "its most important member." And in the same way the Emperor obtains a special place in the Church, outside his functions as Emperor, but because he is the Emperor. As a member of the Church, he received from the Church the sacred mission of being Orthodox Emperor, and that is the meaning of his being anointed with consecrated oil. A mutual interpenetration takes place between the Empire and the Church, represented by the Emperor and the Patriarch, but the metaphysical difference between them—which we have stressed from the very outset—remains unaffected. The two logics, though still different by nature, now form this "symphony" which is the final stage of Byzantine theocracy.

In declaring the Church's victory over Caesaro-Papist Roman tradition, we do not mean to imply that this victory was a permanent guarantee, and that henceforth there were no abuses on either side in the relations between Church

and Empire. After the Iconoclast outbreaks, Byzantine history is unfortunately constantly interwoven with sins and crimes against the very ideal of "symphony."

But these sins and crimes are not peculiar to Byzantium alone. Our purpose in this study was to show the religious significance of the Byzantine experience; and in order to do that the first essential was to look for the ideal which inspired it. And in the long genesis of this ideal, the triumph of Orthodoxy over iconoclasm certainly marks the height of the Church's victory, and the ultimate triumph of Christian theocracy.

But paradoxical as this may seem, it was precisely the absolute and maximalist character of this victory which gave rise to what we believe to be the central drama of Byzantinism, and through that to the whole history of Orthodoxy. This drama is more serious and above all of greater contemporary significance to us than all the crimes of which Byzantium is so often accused.

When pushed to its logical conclusions, the Byzantine ideal—as formulated after the Iconoclast outbreak—does in fact seem to be a negation of history and obtains an eschatological emphasis. In that ideal Empire and Church are regarded as two absolutes, representing two complete entities, so that the ideal itself is bound to become fixed. This ideal is no longer an incentive to development and action, but is in the strict sense a "THEORIA"—the contemplation of a harmony which must be preserved and defended, not attained nor improved.

For after having given the Empire such a high place, and having assigned to it such a holy task (that of being the earthly habitat of the Church), the Byzantine Church no longer regarded the Empire as an accident of history, but as an absolute necessity, as the eternal, predestined setting for the Church's life on earth. "The Emperor is predestined, in God's wisdom, to govern the OIKUMENE—and it is impossible for Christians to have the Church without the Empire"—so the Byzantine texts proclaim. Christian theocracy and the Empire are therefore the final achievement and the zenith of the whole of history. And if the Byzantine chroniclers often draw their inspiration from the apocalyptic vision of Daniel concerning the four empires, the reason is that they wished to show that human history achieved its zenith and its ultimate need in the Empire of the Christian Emperor.

On the other hand, if the sacred duty of the Empire, assigned to it by the Church itself, consists in the defence of and loyalty to Orthodoxy, then Orthodoxy must also become a stable and perfect entity. For all the crises and failures of theocracy in the past originated in the Church's search for truth and the development of its doctrine. A crystallisation of Tradition began to take place in the Byzantine Church, a tendency to fix the tradition and to consider it as complete and unchangeable. In this sense the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" acquired (to the Byzantine mind) the value of a definite and complete victory of Orthodoxy, which marked the final achievement of its historical development. The Orthodox Church is henceforth defined as "The Church of the Seven Councils and of the Fathers." Henceforth any kind of heresy is regarded by the Byzantines as a mere repetition of ancient heresies and is condemned by an almost automatic reference to the decisions taken in the past. This fundamental conservatism, which today is still one of the most characteristic features of Orthodox mentality, and which endows the most accidental

details of the Church's life and worship with an absolute character, originates precisely in this basically anti-historical attitude of Byzantium. The purpose of the individual life is to find salvation within the Church; but there is nothing further for human history as a whole to accomplish nor bring to perfection, because human history is incapable of further progress.

But this anti-historical attitude gave rise to the greatest sin of Byzantine theocracy, its worst mistake. For history did not stand still. And in a new conflict—this time not between Church and State, but between the *THEORIA* and history, between the static ideal and the dynamic reality—theocracy passed through its final metamorphosis, culminating in its own defeat.

UNIVERSALITY was the first essential condition of the theocratic ideal of the Christian Empire. The Empire cannot be anything but unique and universal, like the universal Church which lives under its protection. "There is only one Christian Basileus (Emperor) in the whole universe" was the axiom of the theocratic conception. But the very heart of this theory was contradicted by the facts of history. For in reality the history of the Empire was nothing but a long and tragic downfall, the continuous and relentless transformation of the ancient Roman world into a petty state, threatened on every side by hostile, rival Empires. And here the first rupture occurred between theory and life, revealing for the first time the anti-historical nature of the theory. The Byzantines were so completely dominated by their shining vision that they took no account of the tragic reality. They did not think their eternal, immutable idea needed to be confirmed by facts. They regarded the afflictions which beset the Empire as provisional in character; they might be temptations sent by God to strengthen the loyalty of "His people," but they were incapable of destroying His eternal *POLITEUMA*.

However, although the ideal still survived, it unconsciously became distorted. The transformation of the Empire, and the progressive contraction of its boundaries, resulted in its second "hellenisation." First it was cut off from the Latin West, then after the Arab invasion it lost its Semitic inhabitants, and finally Byzantium assumed the appearance of a purely Greek state, or at any rate a state which was strongly and consistently permeated by the Greek spirit. But then this universality, which was the very foundation of theocracy, began to transform itself paradoxically into Greek nationalism. Nationalism always springs from opposition to other countries, from a sense of danger. The incessant struggle with the Latin West and with the Moslem East strengthened the insularity of the Byzantines, and resulted in a nationalism which was unknown to the tradition of Early Rome. But thanks to the fact that the ideal of theocracy remained intact, this nationalism quite naturally assumed a religious character and, in its turn, acted on the theocratic ideal. "Just as the kingdom of Israel lasted until Christ," said the Patriarch Photius, "we believe that the Empire will belong to us, *Greeks*, until the Second Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus Christian theocracy became the theocracy of the Greek people, or of Christian Hellenism. The idea of the world-wide Empire was gradually transformed into the ideal of a special mission for which Greece had been chosen, a Greek messianism. There is no more telling instance of this

new variant of the Byzantine mind that the painful record of the relations between Byzantium and the Slav peoples which it had converted to Christianity. This record is permeated with the hostility of the Byzantines to any non-Greek form of Christianity, especially to the Slav language. The great work of the Apostles to the Slavs, St. Cyril and St. Methodius—if placed in its historic context—is much more like a concession, or a temporary counter-current in the course of the classical Byzantine policy, than a disinterested mission—in spite of the indisputable holiness and personal disinterestedness of the two saints.

This hostility continued right up to the fall of the Empire. And the struggle between the Greeks and the Slavs under Turkish rule—when they were both suffering under the same oppression—is one of the most tragic and the most shameful pages in the whole history of Orthodoxy. It is deeply significant that the fall of the Empire, which ought to have brought about the destruction of the theocratic ideal, did not cause any psychological crisis in the Byzantine mind. The reason was the metamorphosis within that mind itself, which enables us to see in the survival of Hellenism the continuity of theocracy.

But the present-day importance of this metamorphosis within Byzantinism consists in its profound influence, especially in its theocratic and nationalistic form, on the other Orthodox people who had been converted to Christianity by Byzantium. These were mainly the Slav peoples, whose history is as important as the history of the Byzantine Church for an understanding of modern Orthodoxy. And the essential thing about Slav history is that, when the Slavs were converted by Byzantium, they received together with Christianity this theocratic conception of a Christian Empire, tinged with nationalistic messianism. Greek messianism gave birth to Slav messianism.

This applies particularly to Russia. After the fall of Byzantium, Russia was the only Orthodox kingdom left; it worked out in its theory of the Third Rome a national system of theocracy no less absolute than that of Byzantium. "There is only one Orthodox Russian Tsar in the universe, like Noah in the Ark... Governor of Christ's Church and protector of Orthodoxy." That was the reply of Russian theocracy to Byzantine theocracy. Byzantium could not retain the full priority of its own "ecumenical" ideal, and transformed it into Greek messianism. Russian theocracy was both nationalistic and messianic from its very birth. For "all the empires have fallen." The Russian people alone had been chosen for a special mission in which the history of the world will be accomplished. "After which we await the Kingdom that shall have no end..."

AT THE end of this brief account of the evolution of Byzantine theocracy, we therefore touch on the problem which runs right through the history of our time. For today the problem of the state has become the problem of the nation and of its meaning within the Christian conception of life. This problem assumes a deeply tragic form in the present position of the Orthodox peoples. But in seeking its solution the most important thing of all is to understand the past, and thereby to free one's self from everything in the past which is now merely a dead weight. For in the history of Orthodoxy, Byzantium is always "a scandal and a stumbling-block." We must make the point quite clear. There is no question of denying or abandoning the authentic Byzantine tra-

dition, which nourishes us, and will always nourish us, with its immense riches. The Christian Hellenism of the Greek Fathers, the Sacred Hellenism of the liturgy and the icon, the Hellenism of the mystics of the Hesychiasm, will always remain the unique source of our inspiration, of our growth within the body of the Church. We must return to this Hellenism, which is often forgotten or neglected by the Orthodox mind, in order that the Church may be reborn to its eternal youth. But we must learn to distinguish this eternal tradition from the errors and defeats revealed in the history of Byzantium. And the first and greatest of these defeats, the one which still poisons the air we breathe, is this *nationalistic* outgrowth of the great dream of theocracy. The Byzantine Empire has passed away. Holy Russia has passed away. Nationalism has become completely pagan and materialistic; it is like a new idol which demands sacrifice and worship. But Christians go on propping up this idol with their religious "racialism" and by their psychological isolation in national "autocephalous" bodies. It is time to return to the Great Church, to universal sources of living Orthodoxy.

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SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

SOCIOLOGY is the youngest of the sciences, and there are still many who question its right to be considered as a science at all. It is but a century since Auguste Comte announced the advent of the new science that was to be the keystone of the scientific edifice and the crown of man's intellectual achievement, and though the last hundred years have seen a great increase of interest in social questions and an enormous production of sociological and semi-sociological literature, there is still little prospect of the realization of his ideal. In fact, there has been, in some respects, a distinct **retrogression from the** position that had been reached in the middle of the last century. Sociology no longer possesses a clearly defined programme and method; it has become a vague term which covers a variety of separate subjects. Sociologists have abandoned the attempt to create a pure science of society and have directed themselves to the study of practical social questions.

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Sociology seems in danger of becoming a scrap-heap on which are thrown any items that cannot otherwise be disposed. Nor is this the only danger. Even the writers who do deal with genuinely sociological problems frequently do so in an entirely unscientific way.

This is most unsatisfactory, not only from the point of view of the sociologist, but in relation to the scientific outlook in general. The problem of sociology is probably the most vital scientific issue of our time, for if we admit the impossibility of creating a scientific sociology we are confessing the failure of science to comprehend society and human culture. It is impossible to create a scientific civilization from outside by a development of the material resources and the external mechanism of society. There can be no scientific civilization without a science of society. You cannot plan the future of a society if you have no knowledge of the true nature of the society in question. Moreover, at the present day the plans of the economists are at the mercy of the policies of the politicians, and the politicians themselves are the instruments of a public opinion which is swayed by obscure and non-rational forces. The statesman who fails to understand these forces is a failure, but his failure is often less dangerous to society than the success of the "practical politician" who understands

how to use these forces for his personal advancement without understanding their social significance.

The crisis of so-called scientific modern civilization is due to its combination of an elaborate technical and mechanical equipment with an almost complete lack of social direction. The societies of the past possessed their own organs of social direction and their formal principles of order, which were not indeed scientific, but were based on social tradition. Modern society has abandoned this social traditionalism in the name of rational principles, but it has done little to create the foundation of scientific sociology that these principles seem to demand. Instead of this our social order is still based on the political and moral dogmas of the philosophers of the eighteenth century. The doctrines of modern democracy are not a scientific theory, but a moral and semi-religious creed which owes more than we generally realize to the personal inspiration of Rousseau and is hardly separable from the mystical Deism with which it was originally associated. This doctrine is, in reality, much further from scientific sociology than was the old Aristotelian political philosophy, which was, within its limits, firmly grounded on a basis of observed facts and a rational theory of social life and development. Moreover, the new movements that have arisen in opposition to the dominant theories of liberal democracy are also deficient in a pure sociological foundation, and are derived either from the economic theories of the nineteenth century or from the political philosophy of nationalism.

Thus we are faced by the contrast of a highly specialized development of scientific technique in the external conduct of life with an almost complete absence of scientific direction in regard to the life of society itself. And yet there can be no question of the vast resources of social knowledge that have been accumulated during the last century and more. The modern development of history and anthropology, of economics and the comparative study of religion is hardly less remarkable than that of the physical sciences. A new world has been opened up to us in the past, and our resources for the understanding of human development and its social processes have been immeasurably increased. There is not a priori reason for excluding all this new knowledge from the field of science. It is genuine scientific knowledge, as reliable and as systematic in its own sphere as that of the physical sciences. It is no mere collection of scattered facts and subjective opinions, but an organized department of knowledge, or rather a number of such departments.

Why, then, need we despair of the science of society when the available resources of knowledge are so great and the need is so obvious? But the fact is that these conditions, that are at first sight so favorable, have actually been a hindrance rather than a help to the development of sociology. The most successful sciences are those, like physics and mechanics, which found their method before they were involved in a mass of detailed observation and before there was any question of using them for practical or utilitarian purpose.

The development of Sociology has followed the opposite course and has suffered accordingly. It started with an embarrassing wealth of material and a desire for premature practical results, but with no assured method. The besetting sin of the sociologist has been the attempt to play the part of a social reformer, whether, like Comte, he embarked on grandiose schemes for the re-

constitution of society or, with the modern sociologist, he plunges into the practical work of civic reform.

The early sociologists were great systematizers with a gift for generalization that carried them far beyond the limits of sociology proper into the deep waters of ethics and metaphysics. They improvised a whole philosophy as a basis to their real work as sociologists, with the result that they came to think more of their philosophy than of sociology itself. Thus the efforts of the Encyclopaedists, the St. Simonians and the Positivists result in the creation of a theory of society which was at the same time a philosophy of history, a system of moral philosophy and a non-theological substitute for religion.

THIS identification of Sociology with philosophy tended to bring the whole subject into discredit and caused a considerable body of opinion in the later 19th century to despair of the scientific possibilities of sociology, and to look instead to the new science of anthropology as an alternative. It caused sociologists themselves to react against the speculative tendencies of the earlier sociology, which they condemned as "armchair sociology," and to immerse themselves in detailed statistical and practical enquiries which alone seemed to offer a prospect of concrete results. But the new movement avoided rather than solved the real problem of scientific method, and it often involved a substitution of the study of social machinery for that of society itself. Nor did it even escape the old danger of abstract philosophical generalization. Modern English and American sociology remains to a great extent dependent on the old tradition of 18th-century moral philosophy. In America, especially, the ideal of the last generation even went so far on one occasion as to define sociology as "a moral philosophy conscious of its task." It is easy to understand how, under the existing circumstances, the sociologist was forced to look to an ethical ideal for guidance and help. But nothing could in fact be further from the ideal of scientific sociology and it led merely to the creation of a pragmatic system of social ethics that embodied all the impurities and confusions of thought that it is the purpose both of philosophy and science to eliminate.

The continental schools of sociology, on the other hand, have been far more conscious of the need for a strict definition of scientific method and for the delimitation of the province of sociology from both that of philosophy and that of the other social sciences. Hitherto, however, they have not been altogether successful, although they have accomplished much valuable work. Their efforts have been handicapped by the confusion that has characterized the development alike of modern philosophy and that of the social sciences. In the case of the latter there has been an overlapping, due in part to the riches of the available material, in part to uncertainty of method, and also in part to a non-scientific rivalry between the different sciences.

This has been most serious in the case of the two new sciences of Sociology and Anthropology, which have been, from the beginning, competitors in the same field. They started out, like rival prospectors, to establish as large a claim as possible in the unoccupied territories of the new world of knowledge; and consequently they both developed far more territory than they had the means to develop. Both of them take as their motto "*Nihil humani a me alienum puto.*"

The Sociologist claims all social phenomena as his province, and there are few human phenomena that are not social. The Anthropologist claims that his science is the science of Man and of human development, and consequently includes everything from human paleontology to the comparative study of religions.

It is obvious that if these claims are taken at their face value, neither science leaves any room for the other, except in so far as the sociologist does admit the existence of physical anthropology as an independent discipline. We may almost say that both sciences deal with the same subject, and that they differ only in the manner of their approach. In practice, however, a certain *modus vivendi* has been reached, although it is neither logical nor final. The Anthropologist deals with primitive man and his society and culture, the Sociologist with the more advanced cultures and with the phenomena of contemporary social life. The Anthropologist has had somewhat the better of the bargain, since his material lends itself more easily to objective scientific study, and consequently he has done as much in recent years for sociological studies as the sociologist himself. This is particularly the case in America, where anthropologists, such as Kroeber, Wissler, Lowie and Goldenwieser, have produced works which are admirable introductions to sociological study and are far superior in scientific method to the average textbook of Sociology.

This superiority is largely due to the fact that, in dealing with primitive cultures, the anthropologist is not embarrassed by the rival claims of the historian and the archaeologist. The archaeologist and the anthropologist co-operate with one another in the study of primitive culture, and there is no attempt on the part of the one to dispense with the help of the other. The case of the sociologist is very different, through no fault of his own. It was hardly to be expected that the historian would welcome the co-operation of the sociologist, in the same way as the archaeologist and the pre-historian have welcomed that of the anthropologist.

THE ADVENT of Sociology found history already in possession of an established position and enjoying a well-earned prestige. It was regarded, not as a science, but as literature; it was a branch of the humanities, and as such must be judged by artistic rather than scientific standards. This conception goes back in origin to the historiography of the ancient world from which our own historical tradition is ultimately derived. To the Greeks history was a form of rhetoric and had nothing in common with science, which finds its true pattern in mathematics and geometry. Science is concerned with the universal; history with the particular. Science belongs to the world of absolute and eternal reality; history to the world of time and change. Science is Truth; history is Opinion. In this respect every Greek was a Platonist at heart and shared Plato's belief that the less a science has to do with facts which are inevitably subject to perturbation and change, the more perfect it is, and the more it immerses itself in the sensible world, the less right has it to be considered scientific. Now this ideal, stripped of its metaphysical connotations, has been passed down by the scholars and scientists of the Renaissance to modern times, and has had a profound influence on current conceptions of history. Right down to our own days scholars have continued to repeat that history is not science, because

there can be no science of the particular, and history is concerned with the study of particular events.

Consequently the historian is driven either to fall back on the old literary-rhetorical idea, which still possesses a distinguished champion in Professor Trevelyan at Cambridge,¹ or to return to the ethical ideal and like Acton to attribute to history the office of a moral censor, or, finally, with Croce to identify history with philosophical intuition.²

But none of these alternatives is really satisfactory to the modern historian, and the prevailing tendency is to maintain the independence of history at all costs by treating history as an end in itself.

The most distinguished representative of this tendency was the late Eduard Meyer.³ His attitude to history was, indeed, that of the scientist rather than the man of letters, and has nothing in common with the literary-rhetorical ideal. But on the other hand he maintains the absolute dissimilarity of history from the other social sciences, and bases its claim to independence precisely on the old argument of its particular and individual character. Sociology and anthropology seek, no less than the sciences of nature, to submit human development to general laws and to order the multiplicity of social facts according to universal concepts. But in history there is no room for general laws or causal principles; its world is the world of chance and free human actions, and it cannot pass beyond this. That is why, he says, "the modern attempts to transform the essence of history, and to set before it other and 'higher' tasks, leave the historian unmoved; history exists once for all, such as it is, and will always maintain itself in this form, and the business of the historian is with things as they are and not with abstract theories. Whether history is valued more or less is a matter of no concern to him."

But in reality, as J. B. Bury has pointed out, it is impossible to dismiss the question of the significance of history as a matter of no importance. If history has no end except the collection of facts for their own sake, it becomes merely an intellectual pastime, like stamp collecting. If it is to receive the respect that it has always claimed, it must mean something in terms of reason and have some relation to the social sciences. The fact is that this opposition of history and science ignores the whole change that has passed over the world of knowledge since modern science and modern history made their appearance. Modern science does not aim, like that of the Greeks, at the contemplation of unchanging truth. It is essentially inductive and experimental, and surveys the whole world of nature as it lives and moves. It is not satisfied with the establishment of a few abstract laws; it seeks to know all the facts about the world and to control the forces of nature. Moreover, it has been profoundly affected by the development of modern biology and the influence of the concept of evolution. The new sciences of living matter such as botany and zoology, and even non-biological sciences like astronomy and geology, are profoundly historical in spirit. They do not contemplate a static universe, but an evolving process in which the time factor is of primary importance.

And, on the other hand, modern history is no longer satisfied with rhetorical narrative or moral criticism. It seeks to understand the past rather as an organic process than as a mosaic of isolated facts. It tends to pay less attention

than in the past to the superficial activity of politicians and diplomatists and more to the action of the permanent social and economic forces that determine the life of peoples. Above all, it is coming to accept the new concept of Culture which has been brought into currency by the anthropologists. It recognizes that the state is not, as the nineteenth-century historians believed, the ultimate social unit and the final end of historical study. The cultural unity is both wider and deeper than that of the state. It is not an intellectual abstraction or a by-product of the political process. It is itself the fundamental social reality on which all the other social phenomena are dependent.

History is, in fact, whether consciously or unconsciously, becoming the science of social development; not merely the science of the past, but the science of the whole human culture-process in so far as it can be studied by documentary evidence. Thus the old opposition between science and history is being done away and history is being brought into increasingly intimate relations with the other social sciences, and above all with sociology. History and sociology are, in fact, indispensable to one another. History without sociology is "literary" and unscientific, while sociology without history is apt to become mere abstract theorizing. Hitherto the greatest weakness of sociology has been its indifference to the facts of history. It has tended to manufacture a history of its own which will be the obedient servant of any theory it happens to propound. It is hardly possible to open a modern sociological treatise without coming across historical "facts" that are unknown to the historians and dogmatic solutions of historical problems which the historians themselves approach with the utmost diffidence.

This is the inevitable result of the mutual distrust between history and sociology and the attempt of each of them to assert its own independence and self-sufficiency. In reality sociology and history are two complementary parts of a single science—the science of social life. They differ, not in their subject matter, but in their method, one attempting a general systematic analysis of the social process, while the other gives a genetic description of the same process in detail. In other words, sociology deals with the structure of society, and history with its evolution, so that they are related to one another in the same way as general biology is related to the study of organic evolution.

Thus a sociological study of Greek culture would concern itself primarily with the organic structure of Greek society—with the city state and its organization, the Greek family and its economic foundation, the functional differentiation of Greek society, the place of Slavery in the social order, and so forth; but all these elements must be studied genetically and in relation to the general development of Greek culture on the basis of the material provided by the historian; while the latter, on his side, requires the help of the social analysis of the sociologist in order to interpret the facts that he discovers and to relate them to the organic whole of Greek culture, which is the final object of his study. It is for the sociologist to define the form of a culture and for the historian to describe its content.

ACTUALLY, however, the sociologists have accomplished very little in this direction. As we have seen, the discovery and the systematic analysis of the

cultural unit have been due to the work of the anthropologists rather than of the sociologists. The latter have been apt to despise such comparatively modest tasks and have aimed at something much more ambitious. From the beginning Sociology has been haunted by the dream of explaining social phenomena by the mathematical and quantitative methods of the physical sciences and thus creating a science of society which will be completely mechanistic and determinist. The path of sociology is strewn with the corpses of defunct systems of "social physics," "social energetics" and "social mechanics," and their failure does little to discourage fresh adventures. Such systems have little use for history or for social reality; they content themselves with generalizations that have no significance and with "laws" which are nothing but false analogies. Thus one writer maintains that social association is a variety of "the law of molecular gravitation" (Carey), another that culture is nothing but an apparatus for the transformation of solar energy into human energy (Carver and Ostwald), while Winiarsky argued that social change proceeds according to the laws of thermodynamics. Such extravagances explain the distrust shown towards sociology by the historians, for their experience of the complex reality of the social process makes them naturally hostile to the crude simplicity of pseudo-scientific generalizations.

Yet, on the other hand, it is equally impossible to understand the life of man and society without the help of the natural sciences. In a thousand ways human life is conditioned and determined by material factors, and there is a legitimate materialism which consists in the definition and analysis of these relations. History by itself is not enough, for it is impossible to understand a society or a culture in purely historical terms. Underlying the historical process and the higher activities of civilized life there are the primary relations of a society to its natural environment and its functional adaptation to economic ends. The sociologist has to study not only the inter-social relations of man with man, but also that primary relation of human life to its natural environment which is the root and beginning of all culture. Here sociology approaches the standpoint of the natural sciences and comes closer to the biologist than to the historian, for the study of a society in its mutual relation with its geographical environment and its economic activity has a real analogy with the biologist's study of an organism in relation to its environment and its function.

The application of this "biological" method to the phenomena of society was the work of Frederick Leplay, who more than any other sociologist may be regarded as the discoverer of a scientific method of social study. In this respect he compares very favorably with his more famous contemporaries such as Marx, Spencer and Buckle. He succeeded in giving an economic interpretation of society which avoids the one-sided determinism of the Marxian hypothesis; he showed the influence of geographical factors in social life in a far more exact and scientific way than Buckle or Ratzel, and he provided a biological interpretation of society which had nothing in common with the semi-scientific, semi-philosophical generalizations of writers such as Herbert Spencer. Leplay took as his unit the study of the family in its concrete geographical and economic circumstances and analyzed its social life and structure in terms of Place and Work. His great work, *Les Ouvriers Européens*, which appeared in

1855, contains a detailed study of thirty-six typical workers' families chosen from every part of Europe from Eastern Russia to the North of England and from every stage of culture from the Tartar herdsmen of the Steppes to the artisans and factory workers of Western Europe.⁴ He studied these, not at second hand, through statistics and blue-books, but by the direct observation of their way of life and by a meticulous study of their family budgets, which he used as a basis for the quantitative analysis of the facts of family life. Leplay's method of social analysis affords an insight into just those fundamental social realities which so often escape the notice of the historian and the student of politics.

But although Leplay's method provides a genuinely scientific means for the study of society, it is not an exhaustive one. It required to be completed by a similar study and analysis of the other social units besides the family—the rural community, the city with its region, and the people and the state, and finally by an historical analysis of the social development and the cultural traditions of the society as a whole. Owing to his concentration on the family, Leplay and his school tended to overestimate the importance of the economic and geographical factors and to neglect the contribution of history. Not that Leplay was in any sense a materialist. He avoided the pitfall of naturalistic determinism which has been the downfall of so many sociologists, and fully realized the autonomous character of the moral and religious element in social life. But he conceived this in a static form, as an invariable which governs social life from outside without entering into it.

BUT a culture is not merely a community of work and a community of place; it is also, and above all, a community of thought, and it is seen and known best in its higher spiritual activities, to which alone the name of Culture was first applied. It is impossible to understand or explain society by its material factors alone without considering the religious, intellectual and artistic influences which determine the form of its inner cultural life.

Even if we consider society in its simplest form—the family—we still find these factors intervening in a decisive way. Not only do the religious and moral beliefs of a society always affect the structure and life of the family, but in some cases, as in China and in classical antiquity, the family was itself a religious unit and its whole life was consecrated by religious rites and based on religious sanctions.

It may be said that it is not the business of a sociologist to concern himself with religious beliefs or philosophical theories or literary and artistic traditions, since they lie outside his province and are incapable of scientific definition or quantitative analysis; yet, on the other hand, it seems absurd for him to study the physical environment of a society and to neglect the spiritual forces that condition its psychic life. The primary task of sociology is, no doubt, the study of the social structure, but this structure, on the one hand, rests on the material foundation of geographical environment and economic function, and, on the other, is itself the foundation of a spiritual superstructure which embodies the higher cultural values. If we isolate society from its material body and its cultural soul, we have nothing left but an abstraction. To see

the Greek city, for example, in its social reality we must view it at once as a product of the earth and as an embodiment of Hellenism, like Erectheus, the hero-king of Athens, who was the child of the Earth Goddess and the foster-son of Pallas Athene.

The intrusion of these qualitatively distinct categories or orders of being into the sociological field is a great stumbling-block in the social sciences. The natural scientist has a completely homogeneous material in the material phenomena that he investigates; so also has the philosopher in the region of ideas; but the sociologist has to deal impartially with material and spiritual factors, with things and ideas, with moral and economic values, with all the multifarious experience of the two-sided nature of man.

Sociologists have always been conscious of this problem, and the spectacle of the brilliant results attained by physical science in its uniform field of study has often tempted them to find a way out of their difficulties by an arbitrary or one-sided simplification of their data. There is something very attractive about a "simple" explanation of the social process which treats the relation of the different factors as one of simple causal dependence and regards one of them as absolute and the rest as secondary derivations from it.

The most popular type of "simple" explanation is, of course, the materialist one, which attempts to deduce the whole social process from economic or geographical or racial factors, and relegates the cultural superstructure to a lower plane of reality as a subjective reflection of material conditions. The classical example of this is the Marxian theory, which reduces both history and society to their economic elements and regards the spiritual element in culture as secondary and derivative. In the words of Marx, "the mode of production in material life determines the character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their existence that determines their consciousness... with the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."⁵

Now the error of this method of interpretation does not consist in the view that the ideological aspects of culture have a material basis in the economic life of society, but in the assertion of an absolute causal dependence which denies the independent significance of the spiritual factor in society. On the one hand, the concept of culture is arbitrarily impoverished by being emptied of all the values that are not explicable in economic terms, and on the other the economic category is arbitrarily expanded in order to include a whole series of non-economic elements.

This fallacy is not peculiar to the Marxists; we find it equally in the theories that profess to explain the whole development of culture on racial grounds and which use the Aryan race or the Nordic type as the *deus ex machina* of the historical process. Such theories explain everything, but also they explain nothing; they are like the conjuror's hat, which is equally capable of producing a cabbage or a white rabbit, as the occasion demands.

At the opposite pole of these materialistic simplifications is the idealist simplification which deduces the social process from the spiritual element in culture. To Hegel and his followers History is the progressive self-manifesta-

tion of absolute Mind. Each culture or people is a successive proposition in the process of a cosmic dialectic, and the material aspects of culture are merely the embodiment of the immanent idea. Such theories are now almost entirely discredited; nevertheless, we must remember that they played an essential part in the development of their apparent opposite—the dialectical materialism of Marx. Moreover, although the historical panlogism of the Hegelians is looked on by sociologists today merely as an historical curiosity, its elder rival, the rationalist idealism of the Liberal Enlightenment, still preserves its prestige in spite of all the ridicule and argument that have been directed against it from the time of Burke and de Maistre to our own days. This Liberal idealism is marked by a belief in an absolute Law of Progress and an unlimited faith in the power of reason to transform society. Concepts such as Liberty, Science, Reason and Justice are conceived, not as abstract ideas, but as real forces which determine the movement of culture; and social progress itself, instead of being regarded as a phenomenon that requires explanation, is treated as itself the efficient cause of social change. Beliefs of this kind are religious rather than sociological, as Pareto has shown in the incisive criticism of *Trattato di sociologia generale*. Nevertheless, they still exercise a powerful influence on popular sociology, and they are not altogether absent from the theories of such distinguished modern writers as the late Professors L. T. Hobhouse and Lester Ward.

There remains yet a third type of explanation, which seems at first sight to offer a more satisfactory way of approach than either the materialistic or the idealist theories, since it professes to explain social phenomena in purely social terms. Nevertheless, this "sociologist" suffers from precisely the same defect as the other "simple" theories. For if, on the one hand, we attempt to study social relations apart from their material foundations and their cultural value, as the "formal" school of sociologists represented by Simmel and Von Wiese wish to do, we empty sociology of its content and are left with a series of logical abstractions. If, on the other hand, we reduce both the material and spiritual element in culture to purely social sources, we are guilty of just the same unscientific simplification as the adherents of economic determinism or Hegelian panlogism. No doubt the exponents of this theory, such as Emile Durkheim, give a much wider analysis of the spiritual element in culture than do the materialists, and, in particular, they do full justice to the importance of the social function of religion, but they do this only by hypostatizing society into an independent spiritual power: not only is the social the cause of the religious, but the two are identical, and the Divine is the social sublimated to an ideal plane. This is not a scientific explanation, but an amalgamation of religion and society by means of an illegitimate substitution of one category for another.

THE fact is that all "simple" explanations are unsatisfactory and irreconcilable with scientific sociology. It is impossible either to make society its own cause or to deduce social phenomena exclusively from material or spiritual ones. As Pareto has shown, the essential requirement of sociological method is to abandon the idea of a one-sided relation of causal dependence between the

different factors and view the social process as the result of a complex series of interdependent factors. Material environment, social organization and spiritual culture all help to condition social phenomena, and we cannot explain the social process by one of them alone, and still less explain one of the three as the cause and origin of the other two.

Although the sociologist must take account of the geographical, economic and intellectual or religious conditions of a social culture, he has no more right to lay down the law on philosophy or theology than on geography or economics. But though this is generally recognized in the case of the science of nature and even the other social sciences, sociology has been far less scrupulous in dealing with the sphere of the higher spiritual values. It is often argued that these are a product of the social process, since there can be no spiritual culture apart from society, and therefore "spiritual sciences" (*Geisteswissenschaften*) can claim no scientific autonomy.

This, however, is the result of a naive confusion of thought. All the spiritual activities that appear in culture—religion, philosophy and science—possess their own formal principle. They are not mere functions of society, but have their own ends, which in a real sense transcend the social category. The sociologist, no doubt, is justified in studying a religious belief in its influence on society, but the theologian does not judge his belief or theory in terms of social value, but in terms of religious truth.

So, too, with scientific ideas, Durkheim has given a most ingenious explanation of the way in which man's ideas of time and space have a subjective basis in the rhythm and order of social life. But the scientist himself aims at transcending all such social subjectivism and attaining some absolutely objective standard of measurement. In other words, the more "anthropomorphic" a scientific idea is, the more interesting it is to the sociologist, and the more worthless it is to the practitioner of the particular science in question.

Actually, however, there is little danger—at least, outside Russia—of the Sociologist dictating to the naturalist or attempting to "sociologize" science as a whole. But there is, as we have seen, a real danger of the sociologist trespassing on the territory of the other *Geisteswissenschaften* and attempting to play the part of a theologian or a philosopher.

A sociologist is, of course, quite within his rights in arguing that religion is necessary to society, or the reverse, or that a particular religion is beneficial or harmful to a particular society. For example, he might conclude from the study of ancient civilization that the introduction of Christianity was fatal to the institutions of the city state and the tradition of Hellenic culture. But this would not justify him in drawing conclusions about paganism or Christianity *qua* religion. That is a matter for the theologian.

When Professor Ellwood, in his well-known book *The Reconstruction of Religion*, argues that religion is necessary to society and performs important social functions, he is reasoning as a sociologist, but when he goes on to "reconstruct" religion and to propound a new form of socialized Christianity, he is exchanging the role of a sociologist for that of a theologian.

It is no matter whether the religious theories that we propound are materialist or supernaturalist, rationalist or mystical, theistic or humanitarian. The point is that when we once begin to make a religion or to discuss purely

religious values, we enter the theological region and speak as theologians, not as sociologists.

Ever since the time of Comte, there has been a constant succession of theological sociologies which aim, not at the study of actual societies or actual social phenomena, but at the reformation of society on the basis of a new religious ideal. These attempts have been almost uniformly unsuccessful, for they are vitiated by an inherent confusion of method. They try to produce a synthesis between religion and sociology, and they succeed only in creating a hybrid monstrosity that is equally obnoxious to scientific sociology and to genuine religious thought.

I do not say that it is impossible for a sociologist-philosopher-king to plan the organization of society deliberately on the basis of general philosophical principles. Something of the kind was, indeed, accomplished by the Tokugawa Shoguns, who gave Japanese culture a conscious unity like that of a work of art. But they could appeal to the prestige of the Confucian tradition—that is to say, to an inspired sociology that had a genuine religion and a divinized sage behind it. If Iyeyasu had manufactured a new religion of his own to meet a purely social need, it is very unlikely that he would have been as successful as he was.

The sociologist who creates a religion of his own for sociological purposes is just as unscientific as if he were to invent new anthropological or geographical facts to suit his theories.

As sociologists we have to accept the existence of this independent order of spiritual truths and values and to study their influence on social action. Whether society requires a religious foundation; what is the actual working religion of our particular society; how far material and social factors affect religious beliefs and philosophical points of view; — all these are questions for our study. But the objective intellectual validity or spiritual value of religious doctrines and philosophical theories lies entirely outside our province.

It does not, of course, follow that these questions are in themselves insoluble or otiose. There is no reason for the sociologist who observes the limits of his science to write off everything beyond it as unreal or as matters of arbitrary speculation. No doubt the study of social phenomena in their complex irrationality has often led sociologists to prefer the despairing scepticism of a Machiavelli or a Pareto to the self-confident dogmatism of the idealists. Nevertheless, if such an attitude is justifiable it must be justified on philosophical grounds. The sociologist as such does not possess the necessary data for making a universal judgment of this kind. Here again he must follow the example of the historian, who no longer seeks to use history in order to justify his political or religious opinions, but who seeks to understand the beliefs of the past as a means to understanding its history.

This method of sociological analysis can be applied to practically every social phenomenon, even to those which seem at first sight to be entirely non-spiritual in character. For example, Max Weber, one of the first modern exponents of "a sociology that understands" (*verstehende Soziologie*), has shown how the development of Capitalism is not to be explained as a purely economic process, but has its spiritual roots in a new religious attitude towards industry and saving that grew up in Protestant Europe after the Reformation.

On the other hand, there are other phenomena which seem at first sight to be purely religious and yet have their basis in economic or social causes.

Thus every social type or institution is the result of the complex interaction of a number of factors that are qualitatively distinct and can never be reduced to simple unity. Take for example the social type of the Samurai in Japan, a type which seems sociologically simple enough, since it represents an obvious social function in Japanese society. Nevertheless, in order to understand it, it is not enough to study the historical evolution of Japanese feudalism and the economic structure of Japanese society. The Samurai type is also the embodiment of a whole complex of moral ideas and religious beliefs—native, Confucian and Buddhist—some of which have a very remote relation both to Japan and to the military tradition. And the ethical code, or cultural ideal that is the outcome of all this is not merely a matter of historical interest; it is an abiding element in the Japanese social tradition, and without it it is impossible fully to understand either Japanese politics or Japanese thought.

But if Sociology needs the help of philosophy and theology in order to understand the spiritual elements in the social process, it also renders services to them in return. We cannot understand an idea unless we understand its historical and social foundations. We cannot understand the Greek institution of citizenship unless we study its spiritual foundations in the religion of the city and the family. But on the other hand we cannot understand the Greek philosophical ideal of political liberty and its ethical ideal of "magnanimity" without a knowledge of the political life and the social structure of the Greek state. And even our modern ideas of liberty and democracy are not unaffected. The philosophers of the 18th century interpreted the classical ideas of liberty, democracy, etc., in an abstract and unsociological way, and consequently they misinterpreted them, and this misinterpretation was not without its influence on their philosophical thought.

In the same way the theologians have often failed to recognize the social and economic elements in religious phenomena, with the result that they have confused religious and sociological values and have allowed a racial or economic opposition to translate itself into a religious conflict. Most of the great schisms and heresies in the history of the Christian church have their roots in social or national antipathies, and if this had been clearly recognized by the theologians the history of Christianity would have been a very different one.

A scientific method of sociological analysis may serve the same purpose for society as a psychic analysis may accomplish for the individual by unveiling the cause of latent conflicts and repressions and by making society conscious of its real ends and motives of action. The actual tendency of practical politics, especially in democratic countries, is unfortunately just the opposite, since they invest such conflicts with a halo of idealism and thrive on sociological misunderstandings.

This is the more regrettable because the modern state is daily extending its control over a wider area of social life and is taking over functions that were formerly regarded as the province of independent social units such as the family and the church, or as a sphere for the voluntary activities of private individuals. It is not merely the state that is becoming more centralized, but that society and culture are becoming *politicized*. In the old days the states-

man was responsible for the preservation of internal order and the defense of the state against its enemies. Today he is called on to deal more and more with questions of a purely sociological character, and he may even be expected to transform the whole structure of society and refashion the cultural traditions of the people. The abolition of war, the destruction of poverty, the control of the birth-rate, the elimination of the unfit—these are questions which the statesmen of the past would no more have dared to meddle with than the course of the seasons or the movements of the stars; yet they are all vital issues today, and some of them figure on the agenda of our political parties. It is obvious that the solution of these problems calls for all the resources of sociological science—even supposing that science was in a much more advanced state than it actually is; yet the unfortunate politician is expected to provide a solution by his common sense enlightened by a cloudy mixture of economic materialism and moral idealism. We can hardly wonder at the popularity of Marxian Socialism, for that at least has a sociology of a kind, though it is elementary and one-sided.

A sociology which disregards its proper limits may create Utopias, but it cannot help the statesman in his practical tasks. What we need is a scientific sociology which will transform the art of politics in the same way that the modern sciences of biology and physiology have transformed the art of medicine. In the task of restoring spiritual order and social health to our distracted civilization sociology has, as Comte realized, an essential part to fulfill. But it is to be achieved, not by usurping the functions of philosophy and theology, as in the Positivist synthesis, nor by ignoring moral and spiritual values, as with Marx. It must recognize at once the determination of natural conditions and the freedom of spiritual forces, and must show how the social process embraces both these factors in a vital union like that of the human organism.

Such a sociology alone can prepare the way for the coming of a new applied science of politics which would plan the City of Man, not by the rule of abstract ideas and visionary theories, nor in terms of material size and wealth, but as a true community.

PROMETHEAN POETRY AND THE FUTURE OF ATHEISM

MICHEL CARROUGES

Promethean Poetry and Religion

SURPRISING as it may appear at first glance, it is religion alone which can pronounce a definitive condemnation against promethean poetry, and yet it is religion which hearkens to it.

In fact the observation of daily reality in no way permits us, as physical science proves every day, to pretend that this reality has a limitative value. What the science and poetry of today cannot achieve, no positive evidence authorizes us to affirm will not be possible tomorrow. It is religion alone, the science of the divine, which can show what are the eternal limits of man, and state that there is an insurmountable limit for the single forces of man in the development of the powers of his nature. But what is thus condemned is only prometheism and in consequence the illegitimate bond which has been established between poetry and prometheism. As for poetry, it profits on the contrary from the supernatural perspectives opened up by Revelation, it appears even as the spontaneous echo of the spiritual instinct of man to the call of divinity; but in this case there are divine promises and divine grace which permit man truly to hope for his deification.

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The central error which engenders so many summary judgments, some denying the truth of poetry because of the weight of daily life, and others affirming the immediate power of poetry in defiance of the same ordinary reality, is the belief in a simplist monism, as if the affirmation of one of these categories of experience authorized us to conclude that it alone correspondes to reality and that the other is pure illusion.

It is necessary on the contrary to admit that there is a true poetic reality as there is a true reality of earth. But from this it necessarily follows that these two types of reality cannot exist on the same plane or in the same way; otherwise it would be true that they would mutually exclude one another: a pure dualism would be as false as the two modes of monism which we have been discussing. It is necessary to recognize that these two orders of reality are distinct but are hierarchisable in a vaster cosmos. This is not so bizarre as it appears. The phenomena of microphysics and those that astronomers observe are not one less real than the other, but they are ordained to different levels

in the same physical world. And among those which astronomers study there are some which are produced today and others which though purely virtual today, will nevertheless be the visible and sensible reality of tomorrow. They can neither be reciprocally denied nor confused, but simply ordained in time.

The situation of poetical reality with relation to customary reality is of the latter type: what today is only the vision of the poet will have become the reality of every instant at a future epoch, the approach of which is rendered possible to humanity only by the mediation of religion.

This superior and polymorphic monism is furnished by religion. It gathers together all things created in the work of the Creator and leads them all back toward Him.

Has the profound unity of the symbolism of deification among all peoples not proved to us that in recovering it to its account Christian Revelation would assume also all its perspectives and that it would realize all its hopes? It sweeps away all the eschatologies of humanity in the conquering tide of its own superior eschatology which comprehends them all and gives them their true meaning, for it alone is capable of separating the wheat from the chaff.

One will perhaps be tempted then to retain only this aspect of resemblance. One will think that the theories are indifferent and that it is enough for us to know that the hopes of poetry are not vain. What is the purpose of lingering for questions of interpretation? Nevertheless this is a capital question, for as soon as one remits to religion the care of guaranteeing the promises of poetry, one renounces the complex which unites poetry to prometheism; one must abandon the exercise of deification—that is the cult of dreams, of ecstasies, of hybris, and the construction of the new Babel—in order to follow Christ.

The question to discuss now, then, is that of knowing if the divine life is that of a transcendent God and if in consequence it is accessible only by the love of that God for us and our love for Him, or whether on the contrary there is only an immanent divinity and therefore a divine element diffused among all things in such a way that a continuous and explorable field unites in all their parts the human areas and the divine areas of existence. One can call those who admit the first solution *theomystics* and the second *psychomystics*, for to the latter the idea of a personal God is an arbitrary notion superadded to mystical experience; but man in the exploration of the abysses of his own spirit can find there directly and without any mediation the field of divinity as an earth to conquer and on this foundation can undertake his own deification.

The Problem of the Mystic Field

FOR the psychomystics this problem does not even appear. They consider that their position contains no interpretation and that it results from the simple verification of mystical facts. They have, they say, pursued their experience without the intervention of any theoretic spirit. No philosophy and no religion has been able to deform the purity of mystic phenomena and that is why they have had the privilege of seeing the absolute reveal itself to them without form and despoiled of all mythology. They think themselves therefore to have the

right to judge without appeal the experience of other mystics and to criticize them for their lack of persistence and for having stopped on the way, the road blocked by their own phantasms.

The truth, on the contrary, is that the course of their experience allows the apparition of the personal God to escape, not because they have passed beyond the region of illusions but because their mode of experience itself excludes in advance all possibility of passing from the theomystic to the psychomystic, of departing from the world and from the Self in order to advance even to the face of the Supreme Thou, of leaving experimentation for love.

Besides we must recognize that the reality of psychomystic experience is not seriously deniable, no more than the reality of the voyage of Columbus to the new world. But just as Columbus wrongly believed he had reached the Indies, just so the psychomystics deceive themselves when they confuse the two types of experience, the exploration of the peaks of the soul and the universe with the entry into the divine life.

Whatever may be the resemblances between the two types of experience as man encounters them in this life, they in no way prove their identity. The sensations of immersion and of light notably witness only to the identity of the spontaneous symbolism which expresses them and to the analogy of reactions of the spirit before that which surpasses and transfigures its existence. We must even admit that there is an analogy between the uncreated and created spirits since they are made in the image of the Creator. From this point of view there is a profound truth in the idea that man is a microcosm, an image and epitome of the macrocosm. It would be perhaps even more exact to say that in this perspective man is a *microtheos*. The error is in not seeing that between this *microtheos* and the Uncreated God there is much more than a difference of dimension; there is a difference of capital nature, for the uncreated God is the Absolute unlimited and self-existent, whereas the *microtheos* is called to the divine life only by a gift of the Creator, after a preliminary trial, for in himself he is only a limited and conditional god, the child of the one, true God who has no equal.

Nothing allows the psychomystic to affirm that the obscure and, for him, unfathomable reality in which he is engulfed, contains in its depths the sources of being and the divine mysteries. It serves for nothing to tell us that the ultimate frontiers of psychomysticism have not yet been reached and that its genius has already explored depths to which ordinary mortals have not yet penetrated, for the water of the sea is the same at the shore as in the wide Atlantic; it is purer here or there, or more troubled, but yet the same, and we cannot seriously maintain that if we seek further we will find a sea of milk and wine.

But, someone will say, the psychomystic does not refuse the experience of God. He is entirely open to everything; therefore to God as to everything else.

Still it is there, this foundation which he believes to be sure but which is madness. For God is not like anything else. This God who is a transcendent person cannot be met on the same plane as a blind and inanimate divinity. The philosophy and the experience of the psychomystic revolve in a vicious circle to the extent that he proposes to himself not simply a psychomystical

undertaking but to compete with the theomystic and to conquer by main force what he should look for only from prayer and from grace. It is vain indeed to free himself from the emprise of animality and to seek again peace and purity of soul; he pursues the Absolute only by ways which are purely human and inadequate to a properly divine end. In effect he attempts to explore by intelligence and sensibility alone, although communication with a person cannot be made without the aid of that charity which is reciprocal love. *Ipsa facto* from the beginning of his investigation he sets limits to it. How can he discover the personal God since he does not seek Him?

Perhaps fleetingly in the depths of his heart he will hear the call of God, even considered as totally unknown and incomprehensible, and if he replies there in the night he will abandon if only for an instant what was until then the domain of his investigation in order to penetrate into the domains of fear and of love. But if he leaves God again and does not return he will easily persuade himself at the end of a little time that this momentary movement was only a weakness that the rigor of his lucidity has finally permitted him to surmount. He will imagine that the theomystics know no other experience, that they are their own dupes and that they stop at the borderline of the true experience of the Absolute, since he has allowed himself to lose in forgetfulness the presence of a God of whom he will have had only a theoretic knowledge. He will disdain the evanescent moments of interrogation at the bottom of himself while he himself will advance with all his strength in the depths of his own spirit.

Still one will perhaps ask himself why divinity would not be an explorable field. Do not the theomystics themselves speak of their sinking into the depths of the godhead?

Certainly it is true that the vastest of immensities is here, but it is transcendent; it has no contiguous zone, if one dares to say it, with any created immensity, even the spiritual; it is concealed in the interior of the Person of God, that is, it is one with it; it can reveal itself to man only if the Person of God reveals itself to him at the same time. Now neither reason, nor science, nor genius can accord such a communication to a creature. All the faculties of being are invited to participate in the feast of the Lamb, that is in the divine riches, but this is possible only because first there has been communication of love, of human love and of divine grace. There is a chasm in fact between an experience based on the relationship of an explored field with the person who explores it, and the experience of two persons who offer themselves or refuse themselves freely, and who communicate themselves only through the gift of their will. Far from being superadded or from being an accidental aspect of mysticism, the personal character of the divinity is the prime foundation of theomystical experience. What sort of divinity would it be that man could treat as an explorable field, except a divinity deprived of the liberty that man himself possesses, a degraded shadow of divinity? A divinity without consciousness and without will—what nonsense! What a wretched object! It is hard to see how such a theory can pretend to differentiate itself from atheism.

Let us note besides that if psychomysticism is placed by definition in the impossibility of understanding theomysticism and of judging it validly, the opposite is not true, for if for theomystics the presence of the personal God

rules all, that does not prevent them from being attentive at times to phenomena of psychomysticism which sometimes they have been obliged to cross over before recognizing the presence of the true God.

Far from all this being ignored by Christian mystics, they have known it from the beginning of the Church since the neo-Platonic mystics, who in part at least were psychomystics, already opposed themselves to Christian thought. It was the same in the Middle Ages, since in a Ruysbroeck one can read these lines which form at once the most precise and the most severe analysis of psychomysticism:

One finds certain perverse and misguided men who possess neither the contemplative life nor the active life and who yet believe themselves to be the wisest and most holy in the entire world. There are those who, despoiled of images in all things in nature along and outside of grace and of virtues, receive them in their own essence above reason. There they find idleness, rest and the privation of images. And this is the summit of nature to which one can arrive without grace and without virtue. But as they are not baptized in the spirit of the Lord and in true charity, they can neither see nor encounter God, nor possess his glorious kingdom in themselves. But what they discover in their own essence, a tranquil leisure above images, from this they think to be eternally blessed... They pretend to be the divine essence, above the distinction of persons, and say that they are set in such a repose that they may not even declare it, for the divine essence does not work.

(*Les douze béguines*, VI, 50)

In theomysticism there is always finally immersion and loss of soul in the Other, that is in God, but it is precisely in this Other insofar as it is other that the soul loses itself and finds itself over and over again. While in psychomysticism the man who thinks to break the limits of his Self has nevertheless not at all disturbed them. He has only closed the doors which lead to the beyond. And if he also has turned away from the exterior world he has done it only to close himself up in the underground of his own emptiness, and in the nadir of his own night he dreams that he reigns over the free and invisible night simply because he no longer sees the walls which imprison him. In a word one can say that theomysticism is epithalamic and psychomysticism is narcissistic. (See Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*.)

The Problem of Self-deification

WE may ask then whether man can turn away from God and build his own deification solely on a psychomystical foundation.

The psychomystic would willingly begin from the affirmation: man is a god, but he does not realize it. Man's only task then would be to rejoin this fragment of the absolute which is in the depths of himself.

Thus he will think himself able to laugh again at all objectivity by pretending that the facts in themselves are favorable to him and that the least little chance would suffice for man to reenter into possession of his eternal good which has been ravished from him by some inadmissible catastrophe.

Here again it is the point of departure which is false.

Despite our praiseworthy desire to regard as vain the limits of the human condition, all the same we cannot seriously regard them as non-existent. If we are not today gods indeed, nothing prevents God from allowing us to become so tomorrow, but this is not enough to assure us we can become so by our own powers.

If man is not now the absolute, whence will he draw the power of becoming it? In fact, if nothing separates him from his own divinity, what is he waiting for before entering into his kingdom? Why has he waited so long to enter it?

If there is an exterior power which prevents him, then it is this power which is the absolute and from it would come to us the possibility of identifying ourselves with it, and of moving it. We would no longer be the Absolute and how would we become it, for it cannot be situated in time since the absolute is by definition situated outside of time?

Even if we admit that it is given to man to break this malignant yoke, what is this delay which has been imposed on him until now, what is the necessity of absolute-man to compromise with time except a congenital vice of his being which shows that he is not truly the absolute and that he remains in submission to Fate? He has not hitherto been able to overcome it: where will he now find the power to conquer it? If it is time which brings so great a gift, then time and not man is revealed as the absolute, but then how does man know that time will really make him this gift?

But let us posit the same question in the manner most favorable to the psychomystic, and suppose that man is separated from deification only by an interior sorcery, by a sort of spontaneous misunderstanding produced in the consciousness of man. Man would then be an absolute led by the dizzying game to lose his way in his own labyrinth, to the point of doubting himself, of allowing a cleavage to be produced in his own being, dividing his superior unity into human consciousness and divine consciousness. But the very joining of these words shows the absurdity of the idea. And then, even if this deposition is only the result of an interior illusion, it is none the less real and disastrous. Even if man is separated from his deification only by a superficial and absurd illusion, and even if it would suffice to take consciousness of this fragile obstacle to dissipate it like a morning mist and to recover his lost power, does this permit him to think that the self-deification of man is possible?

Certainly not, for if an imaginary disease does not alter the body it is nevertheless a disease of the spirit. In the same way a disease, even though it be imaginary, in the depths of the absolute testifies that it can pretend to be an absolute only by an abuse of language.

What in fact is this all-powerful grotesque which does not know itself, and which is struck with blindness and paralysis? Even a shade of disease is too much. There cannot be even this shadow in what is defined as the absence of all disease. There cannot be the least trace of impurity, of weakness, of unconsciousness, in that which is all purity, omnipotence and omniscience. The very idea is more absurd than that of the squared circle, for this latter opposition sets in conflict only relative things, while that of a non-absolute

absolute is contradiction itself. Even if one could fall back on the fantastic thesis that man is only relatively an absolute, it would be to introduce a serious concession into the thesis of psychomysticism, for then there would be an insurmountable barrier which would prevent total self-deification. To speak of partial deification is mere word-play, and we will see into what consequences such an undertaking would get itself.

But if this initial dehiscence of the absolute is produced in the interior of man, it is nevertheless even in man a power alien to man, something which remains irreducible to him and which will never submit itself to him. How would he find in himself something to conquer an absolute which has always been allowed to triumph by virtue of that morbid force?

Here we will meet once more the argument according to which this power can be conferred on man by time. But this kind of argument is placed within a relative which is already a non-meaning. It is to recognize that man is dependent on time, although the essential object of self-deification ought to be to place man above time. It will be pretended that there is a cycle admitting of alternatives according to which our divinity would sometimes be effective and sometimes dormant. But this is ridiculous, for this would be to admit that we are now superior to time and then again in submission to it; but the very idea which this alternation suggests to us is that of a supremacy of time which would dominate both periods. So how could we seriously believe that either one of them would be delivered from the power of time?

Such a conception ends in the same impasse as the time machine of H. G. Wells. However extravagant the other dreams of this visionary of genius, though they may be judged improbable in many details and even in the aggregate, still we cannot demonstrate their radical impossibility. On the other hand the possibility of a journey into time has from henceforth been refuted, for the inventor of this machine cuts down the branch on which he is leaning. The instantaneous result of such an invention would by definition be the suppression of time, a result impossible to date, a result essentially *retroactive*, since its true property would be to break the irreversibility of time and its distinction into past, present, and future. Were this invention the work of a man of the thirteenth century we would already have benefited from it, even the first man would already have profited by it. Even this manner of speaking would be impossible for it is the entire life of humanity which would have been changed and established for always, not in time but in eternity. If such a world had existed or must exist (which is all the same) and if in this world wars were possible, Sesostris would have fought Napoleon, and in another order of ideas Louis XIV would send an embassy to Assurbanipal—or rather, nothing would happen because everything would have happened for all time. We would end only in non-sense.

The idea of self-deification has the same defect. It is too perfect. It pretends to abolish the consequences of the fall of man and to conduct him to this summit of apotheosis where he will dominate all the conditions of existence to which he is subjected—and even time itself. But no notice is taken that in doing this one mocks at the whole painful and tragic history of humanity which must thus be retroactively abolished. It is only a useless defiance. If man must become a god by his own powers, in this world itself, the effects of this diviniza-

tion would always have left a mark on the history of humanity. It is possible to locate on the calendar a social and political revolution, but not a metaphysical revolution.

It does not matter here for us to know how far the power of man will go in the future. If he will be able to direct the course of the stars and to assure himself of immortality here below, that would simply correspond to an integral taking possession of the cosmos. He would then become a superman, but not a god. He would remain in submission to the *Fatum* which in this philosophy would have given birth to the world and to man and which would have engendered his griefs. The cosmic throne will be eternally denied to his violence. Let him abandon it to the Providence which he detests, or to Fate; he is always beaten in this world of metaphysical succession. However high the imperfect raises itself, it remains imperfect. Only the Perfect remains the Perfect; one does not become the Perfect.

Let us note, on the other hand, how Christian metaphysics respects the reality in us, promising deification not in this world but beyond it, and precisely through the grace of the Perfect God. The reality of time past will remain, but our future will be divine by virtue of a power which is not in us nor in our world but which is none other than the very power of God who is All-Power.

The Future of Atheism

THE divinity of man is a vain dream already contradicted by the only indisputable fact of the human condition, but is the future not the refuge par excellence of the most foolish hopes? Will today's error not be tomorrow's truth? If man is not a god in himself and not a god *hic et nunc*, may he not be a god in the process of becoming?

Earlier in this study we have seen that such a concept is contradictory and absurd; but even if it be a hundred times destroyed it always tends to rise again from its ashes, for the desire which gives it birth continues to thrive in the subterranean depths of the spirit. Besides, it renews itself with the immense perspectives opened to modern man by his undertakings of domination and transfiguration of life. Their partial but continuous success lends faith in an indefinite progress and it is through this that he intends to find a possible way out of the impasse in which we think he is enclosed. In place of the infinite he will satisfy himself with the indefinite. Instead of becoming a god he will become a superman. In any event, he thinks, the horizon will continue to recoil before his triumphant advance; a life ever more vast and marvelous will open out before his steps. What matters then these distinctions between the infinite and the indefinite, between the divine and the super-human? From our vantage point in the history of humanity, how would we make a precise and constantly concrete distinction between these two forms of futurity? Both disappear together in a prodigious distance. Is it not necessary here to reject all distinction, as a vain subtlety of theology?

Yet this is the problem which we are about to approach by its most concrete side. We want to know exactly how far humanity can raise itself by its own strength in its attempt to metamorphose life without the concurrence of God. How high can the tower of Babel rise?

This may seem an idle question since for the Prometheans, by definition, Babel can rise to the heavens, while to Christians the undertaking would be futile. We have nevertheless examined this theoretical problem in another chapter and have seen that such an undertaking of conquest of the infinite was condemned by the very fact that *man* is found in the situation of attempting it. But from the practical point of view the system of All or Nothing would be absolutely out of order. If theoretic atheism and the ultimate purpose of anti-theism are simply deceptions which are powerless to change reality, on the other hand the practice of atheism is only too certainly realizable, for man enjoys the terrible liberty to live without God and to construct a Satanic cosmos for himself. That is why the building of Babel is a myth but yet is on the way to realization. The tower is always unfinished and unfinishable hence always at stalemate and yet always in progress. The particular question which confronts us at this moment is to discover just how high the citadel of the superman can be built. Only in that way can we give a concrete answer to the inordinate ambitions of the Prometheans.

The Apogee of Humanity in Atheism

THE world was handed over to man by God and despite the Fall God has not gone back on His word. Man has involved the world in this Fall, but the world remains his field of conquest. There is no limit to the mastery of the world by man. The promises of superman in this respect are not false and it is folly to reject them as improbable.

True, the way in which superman proclaims his ambitions is not pure. His prophecies of taking possession of the world are tarnished with pretensions to deification which confuse the problem; but I will take no account of these at present. Besides it is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is pure fable, and what is genuine prognostication (however bold it may seem.) From the dream of Icarus to that of Captain Nemo many of humanity's improbable desires have been realized. Tomorrow will see the true birth in this world of strange magicians comparable to such disquieting Doctors as Faust, Frankenstein, Ox or Moreau. Fogar and Professor Canterel will dwell amongst us. Too often we are led to retain only the extravagant trappings of these myths and the weakness of their theoretic justifications; still the depths from which they rise is the conjunction of human desires and the ever-increasing success of science, and it is imprudent to take them lightly.

Has it not become increasingly evident these past two centuries that man is advancing with irresistible tread toward the total possession of nature? He has already explored the entire surface of the globe. Little by little he descends further into the depths of oceans, he flies through the air, and asbestos enables him to pass through fire. Tomorrow he will descend into the bowels of the

planet, and he will launch himself into interstellar space. Even now his power descends into the heart of atoms and someday he will know how to lay hold of the very stars and govern them.

In another order the progress of the biological sciences has only just begun. Man will come to total dominance of physiology, to the elimination of disease and the reparation of the consequences of even the worst accidents. Only the resurrection of the dead whose souls will have left here for the hereafter will remain unrealizable without breaking the metaphysical law of humanity. Still it would be possible to arrive at an immortality of fact (or almost), death becoming a most rare catastrophe.

In the same way man will attain to the complete domination of mental nature. The West has remained very sluggish in this domain, but it is awakening and we can anticipate from the conjunction of its methodical spirit with the lengthy patience of Asia a sudden and rapid progress of this other type of science. A day will come in which the mastery of psychic concentration, of premonitions and of all forms of visions will give man a power unbelievable today.

What more does man need? How then can there be limits to his power and his happiness? Will all orders of reality be thus in submission to him? Is this accession of a victorious superhumanity to the totality of the cosmos not the equivalent of deification?

We believers cannot believe in the resurrection of the dead by man. Up till now this is the only point to which we have made denial, but let us grant it, to simplify the discussion. As soon as the power of man over the world will seem to have become perfectly total (and still in the hypothesis of atheism in which we locate this discussion), nothing in the perspectives already opened will be altered: the only result will be the increase of perfection in that even the dead of 10,000 years ago will participate in the future apotheosis of humanity. All the dead will thus reenter the circuit of terrestrial life. The totality of the cosmos would be delivered to a complete humanity. Would not such an idea be unsurpassable?

Believers will be tempted to think that a vengeful decree of God would not fail to smash this proud undertaking; but atheists can only laugh at threats promulgated in the name of a God in whom they do not believe. We must not depart from the framework of the perspectives of atheism. And so it is necessary to admit with the Prometheans the total character of the taking possession of the world by future humanity.

Will man then be God or at least a quasi-divinity? Far from it.

The Indestructible Forces of Fatality

THE privilege of a personal God and a creator *ex nihilo* is to know a limitless happiness, liberty and power. Man born into a world which is anterior to himself cannot know this absolute perfection. All that he can dream of doing is to form and reform this universe as he pleases, even as a demiurge would govern chaos. This is the vision which lies behind his thought when he aspires to a state like to that of a divinity. But even this is impossible.

The prodigious expansion of human power in our time can easily deceive us in this respect. As every day it adds some new conquest to its empire, we naively suppose not only that it can long or even always continue to do so (a tenable position), but even that nothing is beyond its undertaking. We are tempted to believe that there is nothing irrevocable in the divine decree. If He who is the Creator and the Truth is only an empty word, and the let-it-be-done of Genesis is only literature, then there remains only material and mental nature which is handed over in its entirety to our undertakings. Yet it is precisely there that we can demonstrate the deception of atheism. Perhaps we can build a cosmic Babel whose steps will never cease to climb higher and higher, but the foundations of this Babel will always be the world created by God, and beyond its summit it will be vain to climb eternally. Man will never be on equal footing with the Divinity.

For men who let themselves be crushed by daily life such as it appears enclosed in the world of appearance, the liberty of man is only an illusion. For the Prometheans, on the other hand, the scope of this liberty here below will have no limits; they dream that the universe will become absolutely plastic to their desire. They certainly know that today this liberty is not exercised as an omnipotence on nothingness, but in a dramatic fashion against an antagonistic world; yet they dream of a time when these hostilities will end through the radical triumph of human liberty. It is in this that the *faith* consists on which this false religion rests.

It is easy to scorn objections once you affirm that the principle of non-contradiction is good only to toss to the dogs; indeed it is too easy. For the principle is indestructible. Those who mock at it maintain their attitude as long as you are criticizing their reasoning (in order to show that they do not mind having been illogical); but then they demonstrate that you are wrong and that they are right, according to the usual rules of logic, for they have no means for doing otherwise. They laugh at "the Truth," because they call yours this in a spirit of derision, but they believe in theirs as much as you in yours.

Still it is true that modern minds are in large measure right to challenge the value of rationalism. For if it is certain that there is an absolute reason because there is a God who is the Truth, it is no less certain that men are incapable of conceiving it and of expressing it in its entirety, so weak and deficient are their intelligence and their language beside it. Let us not retreat from this into a new pure relativism, for these sparse fragments of the truth which we possess are, all the same, basically and essentially fractions of that absolute Truth which we are seeking. Properly dialectical contradictions are not absurd and do not permit us to deny the value of reason. They express contrarities of fact and of language that the human reason must surmount in order to lay hold of a higher synthesis that is a vaster and richer definition of reality.

There really exists in the world alongside of the rational an altogether irrational part, and believers should be the last to misunderstand this—they who affirm the existence of mysteries as well as the value of human reason. But if human reason must know its limits as well as its value, it ought to recognize that above all there is that divine Reason for which nothing is impenetrable. And it is this divine reason above which can initiate us into super-

natural mysteries by the way of Revelation. It is understood that remarks such as these have no directly demonstrative value except for religious minds, but they are important for all for they indicate the exact position of believers with regard to these problems—a position which is too often misunderstood.

The value of modern science is sharply conclusive for the value of human reason. Who today would dare to deny that man may be capable of little by little penetrating with his intelligence the Secrets of nature and making them do service to his designs? On the basis of the Greek science of geometry, there has been erected a firm structure which today actually allows us to judge the weight, the dimensions and the physical nature of stars and of atoms. The new principles of indetermination and of relativity complicate and enrich our conception of the universe, but they do not alter the indestructible value of science, and consequently of reason. The results of applied science are there to attest to it with an incontestable lustre. In consequence it is fruitless to scorn reason; but it is just as foolish to rely on it blindly. If science makes progress it is because the intelligence of learned men is always prepared to seat itself in the school of facts, to analyze them in an ever more penetrating way and finally to discipline its language in order to give it an increasing precision.

But is it not clear that the victories of the learned over the universe are obtained not by a vain revolt against the order of things, but by their submission to the laws of the universe? Matter is docile in their hands only insofar as they discover the laws which it obeys, and know how to make use of these laws to dominate matter.

These statements have greater importance from the fact that in the domain of sciences of the spirit the situation is exactly the same.

The chaos at which man has at times the sensation of arriving is not that pure primordial chaos anterior to the organization of the world by a demiurge of whom the old cosmogonies speak; it is a relatively creative chaos because it renews and enlarges the taking possession of the world by man but it does not in the least disturb the fundamental laws of the created world which remain anterior to it and impossible to modify. It would be possible to undertake an entire study on the distinction to be made between the modifications which man can work in the universe and the forever irrevocable foundations of being. But to do this would be to pass far beyond the limits of the present work. On the contrary we must insist on another aspect of the question.

Note the terms we have had to use to define the perspectives of the high point of future humanity. I have said that man would yield the three domains among which all the reality of this world is divided: the material, the physiological and the mental. Let us by hypothesis overlook all that I have just said; let us admit that the empire of man over this triple face of nature be absolute; how can one conclude that man can come by this fact alone to equal the divine happiness and omnipotence?

The very word, Nature, is revealing. In the eyes of the atheist that is all that exists. From then on how could he think that something can be lacking to the power and happiness of humanity, since everything would by definition be delivered up to it. God Himself cannot be an obstacle if He does not exist

and, even if He exists, He has separated Himself from humanity. Whence then would come the impossible enemy which would trouble the kingdom of Superman? Would it not be an unconscious phantom issuing from the hallucination of a religious mind?

On the contrary, there is no enemy more unquestionably alive, for it is man himself.

I DENTITY.

There is no prometheanism without the negation of identity and without the corollary affirmation of the infinite metamorphosis of man. The Promethean poet, like the dreamer of Baudelaire, believes he has become God. He makes impassioned pursuit of the mental states which give him the sensation of this blessed alienation. This accounts for the extraordinary prestige, among many people, of eroticism, primitive festivals, all the collective states of effervescence (as Durkheim has studied them), ecstasies, interior illuminations. In all these cases there is an alteration of the feeling of self, an abolition of composure and criticism, an eclipse of self by states of fascination, but not a destruction of the self which experiences them and moreover which remembers them.

Let care be taken: despite the collective character of the sensation of metamorphosis and of ecstasy insufflated by the festival, it has no more objective value than the exaltation of a solitary dreamer. For the Achilles heel of the dionysiac and hydraheaded giant which is the festival is that it is composed only of associated but not fused subjectivities. The man who rejects the transcendence of God and communication with God has thought to become transcendent in regard to himself and to merge himself in the inter-human communication of dionysism, but this pseudo-fusion of beings is only a momentary confusion of judgment. Man has not crossed the threshold of his own individual existence: he has only lost the clear consciousness of his frontiers thanks to this "lethargic element" which is inherent in dionysiac ecstasy, a "gulf of forgetfulness which divides the world of daily reality and the world of dionysiac reality." (Nietzsche: *The Birth of Tragedy*.) Let man regain possession of himself for a moment in the midst of the festival and in as brief an instant it is given over to debacle. Man rediscovers his habitual limits and his coldness; all the elements of festival pass by around him, adrift, broken up and grown cold.

We might invoke phenomena such as those of telepathy. They show that it is possible to have intimate communication, participation between two beings despite distance, but certainly not fusion. It is precisely because two beings have a separate and independent existence that one can speak of telepathy. Otherwise they would have only a single consciousness for two bodies, something which has not yet occurred and which, besides, would pass over the problem without resolving it, just as Alexander cut the Gordian knot without knowing the secret of its intertwining.

Let no one further object that it is possible for a man to forget all egoism and to devote himself to others, for the truth and the nobility of such a be-

havior resides precisely in the fact that the self dominates its own attachment to itself and that it is free with respect to itself. But this liberty does not destroy the self; it exists only with respect to it, otherwise it could not give rise to the love of one being for another; there would be neither love nor liberty, but only a mirage of love in a nothingness of consciousness, that is to say in a fictitious and empty entity.

In vain does pantheism, or more explicitly spiritualist monism, pretend to break the design of human identity. In vain does it affirm that the proper course of autodeification, and of the ecstasies which are supposed to be the path thereto, would be to depart from the self and to unite it to other spirits in the communion of love of a universal psyche: for example in that gnostic church of which Hegel dreamed.

This thesis does not result from any conclusive experience, but on the contrary from preconceived ideas which dissolve into pantheism: hatred of the true God and the need of offering "something divine" as a substitute.

"Those who are awake," said Heraclitus, "have a world in common, but those who sleep turn aside, each into his own particular world." (Burnet, *History of Early Greek Philosophy*.)

Thus each in his dream of self-deification thinks only of what is proper to himself, for he is full only of the existence of his own self and of his personal importance. He has the impression of becoming hyper-real and all-powerful to the same degree as others are blurred and become phantoms. There is an indissoluble correlation here. It is not in public, and even less in confronting the hostility of nature and of other men that the apprentice-god undertakes his Olympian work, but in his solitary meditations and above all in the hot-house of a small group. The conditions of his experience are already a flat contradiction of his conclusions, since his experience takes place under conditions exactly contrary to what is necessary if it is to be convincing. It is not surprising that the monk consumed with love of God or the famished of nirvana bury themselves in solitude, but what is this Titan who tests his strength only in the desert?

Where and when have the pantheist and the ecstatic felt the fusion of their self and that of others in the midst of a higher unity? The ecstasies of certain magical moments do not procure this fusion nor that of man and of the world. It is simply a case of the transference of a self become extraordinarily receptive which lies open to an impassioned participation before other things, but far from being annihilated (otherwise how would it return to itself?), it serves only to draw all things in order the better to enjoy them and to dominate them in the dreams. The self has disappeared from the stage as object, but it is there behind the scenes more present than ever as subject. It has a feigned passivity, for if it is in fact transparent even to the point of annihilation in order to let all things be manifested in it, still it is secretly only the more active in order to dam up its own power and to make place within itself for these manifestations. Even if it comes within sight of nothingness, what greater manifestation of power than to succeed in regaining its own life, to be the master of its own manifestations to the self? At every moment there is truly a death of the self; it is simply, and this is outstanding, an unheard of proteism of consciousness. It is participation and not fusion, which is alto-

gether different, for in participation there is a marvelous expansion of self which can give it such a sensation of alienation and enrichment that it loses itself in its own immensity, but this is altogether contrary to a fusion which would be a true suppression of self. The idea of fusion properly so-called becomes unthinkable as soon as one wishes to apply it to the self. At least if one does not wish to speak of self as signifying an egoistic form of consciousness, but of pure self, that is of consciousness. There can be participation of consciousnesses, communication between them, communion even, but not a fusion which nevertheless allows unconsciousness to subsist. The self is above everything else that which cannot disappear. To be conscious is what makes the person, to be a being which corresponds to itself and feels itself distinct from the world and from others, although immersed in the midst of them. A self which would cease to be itself in order to become another makes no sense; it is a denial of self. Here the only extreme but justifiable position is that of the busying of the activity of self in the nirvana which can be an emptiness of manifested activity but not an emptiness of being for it is not within the power of the creature to destroy himself completely.

Furthermore, the self which professes pantheism, which believes itself to be identified with the world, with another, with God, with nothingness, according to its own wishes if it can profoundly communicate there, if it has become spiritually the other in as much as it is other, according to the purest Thomistic doctrine of knowledge, this self has not therefore lost its quality of self during the time of these experiences; quite the contrary, since it is precisely its inalienable consciousness which has received these experiences. In short, it goes beyond the walls of its own being in order to communicate with the universe, yet without being drowned there. The greatest apostle of the denials of self has the means of convincing himself, if he is willing to reflect, that it is his own self which remembers the ultimate ecstasies and evokes them however nebulously. As slender as this thread may be, it is indestructible and at the same time bears witness to the indestructibility of self.

Actually, far from disappearing in pantheist or atheist experience, the self is exacerbated. Its role is the "I have become God" of the dreamer; then, in effect, it believes itself fused with the All (the only God it admits), but in fact the self has only displaced the habitual situation of consciousness. Instead of locating itself on the borderline of hard realities, between man and nature, between the I and the Other, between the spiritual and the material, the consciousness has retired to this one side of that common threshold from which all worlds bifurcate; it discovers within itself the immense riches which it had withdrawn from its participation in the life of the world; it no longer perceives them as recollections or as perceptions of its own self but as immediate presence and immensity. Thus the self looks down at the world especially across its recollections, at times by some phenomena of telepathy, but it abandons itself to these visions to the point that it undeservedly identifies itself with them, as the spectator before the cinema screen has himself become in illusion the battle or the storm which takes place there.

By no less an illusion the self usurps the place of God. The mysterious power of love and unity which seems to gather together all things in a single living and divine All which no longer imposes itself on us but shines delight-

fully on all sides, is simply that of one's own spirit, it is his own love for himself and at the heart of this egoism, there also wander his passions for the world or for others, good and evil.

But let him chance to wake up and sally forth, let him quit his land of dream and descend into the marketplace, then how he suffers with anger and despair that cold wind which chills him, and the indifference of other men! What more striking than the powerlessness to act in the world of all those sublime dreamers who believed they possessed the entire world in their own self!

How strangely everything is reversed; those Others who were simple phantoms become on the contrary an insurmountable obstacle. But the dreamer rebels, he would like to make pure matter of them for his domination. Therefore mysterious love becomes cruelty, idealism becomes materialism; the passage from one to the other is made in chaotic leaps. The identity of the dreamer, just as it can be constructed from an anthropometric notation, becomes for him the tunic of Nessus that he longs to snatch away. Soon he lures himself into a terrible conflict between self and humanity. The communal city of which one has dreamed so much is rent and gives place to the sadistic denial of the Other. All the reality which man wished to drive away returns to the surface after having been engulfed in the dream, but it enters now in violent hostility with the self which had thought to submerge it. Then is it revealed that there is no Counter-Church, but only an anarchic outbreak of enemies.

Yes, the self is indestructible. Faust, before the romantics and the surrealists, had dreamed the contrary in wishing to make himself a superman and co-rival of God. Yet he could not free himself from his self, for his drama, like Job's, was a struggle between God and the infernal spirit, and in the end he always found himself confronted with his conscience, despite his evil genius. It is Mephistopheles himself who once troubles to recall this truth to him: "You are, after all, what you are."

Is that a misfortune? Yes, to the extent that the self would be only a framework for life and an egoism sealed up in a closed circle, but if it is true that the self can be that, it can to the same extent be destroyed and the way of metamorphosis is open to it. But before being this base and limited form which must be destroyed, and the saints also teach us, it is first of all a source of life and of reality. The identity of the human person is a limitation only for him who by believing himself God makes himself unworthy of becoming a particular being among creatures. But inversely, for beings issued forth from nothingness, identity is precisely that which raises them up out of nothingness. The preservation of identity is only the preservation of life and of the indestructible plurality of created beings. The only desire one must formulate is that this identity does not avariciously always turn back on itself, but that it always become transfigured by a participation of intelligence, love and life with other beings and especially with the Divine Being, for it is through Him that at last it reaches communication with the Unlimited.

LIBERTY.

Here, even more than elsewhere, the spirit takes vengeance on those who would deny it. These are not only the materialists, but also those who reduce

the spirit to being merely the mental part of nature. For these latter also can think that since all nature can be dominated, all will be dominated. Now if it is true that the human spirit is for the most part a single nature, it is also more profoundly something as purely spiritual as the mathematical point is ideally deprived of dimensions. We cannot call it supernatural because of the precise and different sense of this word in religious language, but it is supernatural, metaphysically speaking, that is, it is transcendent to all nature, including its own. And the essential aspect of this being of the human spirit is its indomitable liberty.

The supreme irony is that it is by its liberty that the human spirit is most wonderfully an image of God and that it experiences the desire of deification, but that it is also liberty more than anything else which makes it impossible for the spirit to deify itself. God is the source of all being and the source of all deification; as soon as man turns away from Him, he confines himself within the limits of nature or he is engulfed in nothingness.

How does this ruinous power of liberty manifest itself for the man who turns away from God?

If man was not the seat of an inexhaustible explosive of liberty, he would be capable like stones, animals and stars of fitting harmoniously into the cosmic All. There would be no cracking the crystal palace. But there is in man a mysterious X which is neither substance nor rest, an eternal inadequateness of his being in relationship to himself, an incessant need of metamorphosis and of excelling which leaves him forever unsatisfied. It is this power which will allow man infinite ascent into divine life. But that is the only world in which dissatisfaction can be joined to happiness. As soon as liberty opposes itself to God, it turns against itself; first of all because it deprives itself of the heavenly treasures which infinitely surpass those of the entire cosmos, and next because it can find no satisfaction in this world, but in proportion as it rises toward the pinnacle of power it discovers the vanity of it all with a dissatisfaction ever recurrent and more and more grievous.

In the fever of action and of projects one can momentarily conceal this human situation from oneself, but the more closely man approaches total domination of the cosmos the more cruelly conscious will he become of this concomitant disaster. Balzac has an admirably lucid passage on this:

By drawing with full hands from the treasury of human pleasures he promptly reached the bottom. This enormous power, apprehended in an instant, was in an instant tested, judged, put to use. . . . His enlarged faculties had changed the relationships which had heretofore existed between the world and himself. . . . Women and good cheer were two pleasures so completely satiated, that from the moment in which he could taste them without pleasure he no longer had the desire either to eat or to love. Rich with all the earth and able to free himself from any bond, yet riches and power no longer signify anything for him. The madmen who desire the power of demons, judge it with their human ideas without foreseeing that they will appropriate the ideas of the demon when they take on his power, that they will remain men and in the midst of beings who can no longer understand them. The unpublished Nero who dreams of having Paris burn for his distraction, as in the theater one is given the simulated spectacle of a fire, does not doubt that Paris will become for him what an anthill beside the road is for a hurrying traveler.

Sciences were for Castanier what a riddle is for him who sets it... He felt himself confined on the earth for his infernal power caused him to assist in the spectacle of creation, the causes and ends of which he saw dimly. (*Melmoth réconcilié.*)

The liberty of man continually breaks itself against the obstacles of life, but it continually rebounds to dominate them and climb ever higher. It is an unlimited capacity for willing good and evil. It maintains in man an inexhaustible force of destruction and aggressiveness, but as the ambitions of man are gradually realized, the thirst which inspired the first ambitions has only increased though continually directing itself at new objects. Man quickly becomes habituated to what he has conquered, he places himself naturally at the height of the most remarkable undertakings which he has brought to a successful conclusion; then he no longer regards the road he has crossed over, but his gaze raised to the zenith he measures the always infinite distance which separates him from it. The higher he has come the more immeasurably exalted are his ambitions and his desires. Even if he could dominate the entire world he would remain unsatiated.

Let no one object that a man, even an atheist, can seek wisdom and in it allay this unbridling of his liberty. That is true but it lies outside the problem. Whence then will man obtain this spirit of wisdom: it cannot be in atheism for that can teach only the pseudo-morality without an imperative of utilitarianism; it can only be in an invisible participation in divine grace, but then it is no longer a question of atheism in the pure state although it can admit of it.

How is one longer to withhold the fact that even before death most of the time the forces of man decrease in this tension toward the unlimited, for men substitute one for another to pursue this immense task. "Let him burst in his bounding through unheard of and unnamable things: let other horrible voyages come; they will begin from the horizon into which the other had sunk!" (Rimbaud, *Lettre du voyant.*)

The total possession of exterior and interior nature cannot give birth to the perfection of wisdom. There is no common measure between the knowledge of the cosmos and the mastery of liberty. India has discovered admirable techniques for the mastery of the mental, but that is not the same thing. We are always free to follow or not to follow these techniques and even to use them for ends of purification and of appeasement or on the contrary for ends of destruction, perversion, enchantment, in short for black magic. Throughout Hindu literature in fact one finds warnings against this abuse of supernatural powers. In the purest of the mystics one even finds a systematic defiance with regard to all seeking after power.

Let us recall too that the first sin of mankind was not committed on this earth of pain and ignorance where we dwell, but in the very heart of Paradise. Much more significant, the first sin of all creatures was committed by a Prince of Angels, by that enigmatic Lucifer who at the pinnacle of light and of science revolted against God. This shows that no science, no technique, no genius can protect a free being against the delirium of his liberty. There is no mechanical sanctity and the worst perversions are committed by those who having reached the heights of virtue have fallen again into evil. Besides, all

of these techniques are relatively well-armed against the tyranny of the flesh in the true sense, that is, against the appetites of the senses, but what technique would it be possible to find which would definitely shelter him from pride? There is none and yet pride is the greatest temptation for minds which have raised themselves highest above other infirmities of man, and it can always awaken the worst temptations.

Even to the end of time the liberty of man will always be tempted to give itself over to every form of hybris and it will never cease to struggle in the great drama of good and evil, to plunge into every possible kind of excess, to purify itself and then to begin again the intermingled cycles of its variations.

Man cannot find perfect rest and peace here below; even if he reaches it for an instant, he himself is soon tempted to destroy this ephemeral success. Dostoevsky in a justly celebrated passage wrote:

Now I ask you, what can you expect of a man, of a creature endowed with such bizarre qualities? Overwhelm him with all earthly goods, plunge him headlong into happiness, so deep that only bubbles rise to the surface as if it were in the sea. Guarantee his well-being to the point where he has nothing to do except sleep, eat gingerbread and anticipate the interruption of universal history. Even then through malice, through pure ingratitude man will play dirty tricks on you. He will even risk the gingerbread and will expressly desire the most pernicious trifle, the most extravagant absurdity, only to mix his fantastic deadly element with all this positive wisdom. He wishes precisely to keep his fantastic dreams, his vulgar silliness, to the sole end of proving to himself (as if this was indispensable) that people are still people and not piano keys on which the laws of nature play without doubt, but which they threaten to monopolize to the point that without the almanac one will no longer be able to will anything. Furthermore, even if he found himself really to be only a piano key and this was demonstrated to him by natural science and mathematics, instead of surrendering to reason he would expressly do something to the contrary out of pure ingratitude—properly speaking, to have the last word. And if he lacks resources he will invent destruction and chaos, he will invent diverse sufferings, and he will have the last word. He will hurl maledictions on the world; and as only man can curse (it is his privilege, that which principally distinguishes him from other animals), without doubt he will come to his ends by cursing alone, that is, he will really convince himself that he is a man and not a piano key. If you object that all this too, chaos, darkness, cursing can be reckoned according to a table, so that the only possibility, so that the very possibility of previous calculation will stop everything and reason will win the day—then man will go mad expressly to disembarass himself of reason and to have the last word. (*Notes from the Underground.*)

Buddhism has clearly seen that it is our desires which make a tragedy of human life and that is why it does not preach the possession of the world, but the extinction of desire in Nirvana. But we feel we are at the very opposite of the idea of the superman with such a doctrine, since it is no longer a question of carrying man to the summit of creation but of plunging him into a state which stimulates nothingness, at least in the most negative interpretation of Nirvana. Man can find rest here below only by the sacrifice of his liberty, by the destruction of his life. It is possible that humanity may become mistress of all things in the world—and yet we have seen under what reservations—but

nothing guarantees that living and concrete men will know how to make a peaceful and charitable use of these riches, for they will always live a prey to their interior demons and at the same time to the impulses of grace.

D ISCORD.

In order to bring about a complete return to concrete reality, and to measure the true perspectives opened to future humanity by atheism, it is not sufficient to oppose the identity and the liberty of living man to the harmonious omnipotence of ideal man. It is also necessary to oppose the multiplicity of real men to the unity of abstract man or to that of the dreamer.

Superman and the superhumanity spoken of by the prometheans are only abstract fictions. What will exist tomorrow even as it does today is a numberless multiplicity of individuals. If we are to pose the problem of deification in a truly concrete manner, we must confront this terrible difficulty: the competition among themselves of a multitude of rivals in the conquest of deification. It is the war of the gods which is beginning.

If there is in each individual a principle of exasperation which can torture him even in solitude, how much more does it rend humanity in setting men in opposition to one another. Of course, man in isolation could never aspire to domination over nature, and there actually exists a certain amount of cooperation among men which is the essential lever of progress, but this does not preclude an incessant rivalry which sets them in opposition and which drives them into endless disputes over the fruits of progress.

Does not the Bible itself indicate to us the essential cause of the repulse of Babel? Not the height of the structure, the failure of materials, the incompetence of the architects, some cataclysm, but the confusion of tongues, the misunderstanding of men. It is always this same cause which will prevent the coalition of atheists from realizing not only its own deification but even the harmony of a happiness which is superhuman and analogous to the trinitary harmony.

It has not been properly considered that in suppressing the idea of a single God-Creator and in proposing to all men, under color of pantheism or of atheism, access to deification, we would in fact be reverting to polytheism, with its host of gods which remain in submission not only to Fate but also to Discord.

The idea of God, of a perfect and absolute being, imposed monotheism, and by a logical necessity as certain as that of according three angles to a triangle. Two perfect and absolute Gods is an absurd conception for they would reciprocally limit themselves, which goes counter to the very definition. As has been often noted, the idea of polytheism lowers the divine majesty; but this is too little to say, for in truth it denatures the very idea of Divinity. To multiply the gods is to divide Omnipotence and at the same time to posit the principle of a limitation of powers, which is a contradiction.

It is with supermen as with the gods of paganism. To propose self-deification to a single man is already a vain undertaking, but to propose it to all is completely to change the end envisaged; it is to undermine the very foundation of the undertaking.

Of course, the man who dreams of his own deification does not perceive this contradiction, for in his proud dream he sees only the general rush of humanity toward a prodigious end; and above this, the glowing troop of spirits to whom sympathy binds him; and higher still, his own self become a supreme self. From this point of view atheism does not at all appear to him as a polytheism, and at base it is, in fact, only a monotheism whether conscious or not, but to his own profit. And after all why is it not I who am God, he cries in his naïvete. This cry is not feigned; did not Nietzsche exclaim, How could I endure not being God? We must not believe this is a particular aberration: it was in the person of Adam, the sin of all humanity who willed to be the equal of God. Atheism is only the ultimate perfecting of this project: man clearly sees that there cannot be two rival divinities. For humanity to reign it is first necessary that the old God perish.

But this position is only a delusion; it does not hold except in the interior forum. When once God has disappeared, the unity of humanity has no other foundation, and from the moment that man sets himself on the path of impious deification, he enters into conflict with his equals for the same motives that he entered into conflict with God. But this time he smashes himself against the fact that the reality of other men is not deniable like that of God, and that he cannot elude their presence and their competition. He knows that for his deification he has need of the concurrence of all humanity, but he wishes to take on this task for his own profit.

It would be of the greatest interest to consider here again in this new perspective the admirable meditations of Moehler on the community of men in the Church and their disunity outside it. For him the characteristic of heresy is "to exult the limited individuality of its author to universality" (*L'unité de l'Eglise*, p. 139.) This is an illusory but tyrannical universality. This spirit of disunion is the typical mark of the action of Lucifer.

The ambition of the Self of the promethean atheist hardly leaves him liberty of mind to interest himself in the fate of the multitudes for whom he has posited the right to self-deification in only a formal manner. He is as little interested in this as the liberal capitalist is preoccupied to know if the political liberation of his employees is or is not a vain word.

But if we depart from this egoistic point of view, and if we place ourself at the only point of view which is admissible both in fact and in right, which is that of all humanity, we see that the principle of self-deification leads humanity only to that monstrosity which we must call Anarchotheism, to a multitude of Omnipotences, which is the most absurd nonsense one could invent.

The great lesson of Sartre's play *No Exit* is to show that, delivered into its own hands, humanity finally can only destroy itself. Even without the visible presence of demons it is perfectly capable of building a hell for itself. The celebrated phrase, *L'enfer, ce sont les autres*, in very crude fashion sets in relief this principle of imitation and of exasperation which devours humanity and cannot allow it to rest, but on the contrary brings it to the aggravation of its condition.

Edgar Poe in his great cosmogony of Eureka has already shown that no stable end can be proposed for the universe: "The absolutely consolidated globe of globes would be without end and without object; consequently it could not

continue to exist for a single instant." Absurd indeed is the vision of such a unique planet without any sun, absorbing into its womb the totality of living beings. How could the explosion of life into space lead to such a restriction upon itself? This is the idea which Georges Bataille expresses with greater clarity still when he writes:

But if the whole of men—or more simply their integral existence—was incarnated in a single being (evidently as solitary and abandoned as the whole), the head of the incarnation would be the site of an unappeasable combat, and one so violent that sooner or later it would fly into a thousand pieces. (*Acéphale*, V, p. 4.)

Perhaps it is possible to conceive that all living things growing cold, they might contract and maintain themselves in a state of motionless union like that of the stones in a wall, but that will never be conceivable for man. The multiplicity of men is not only of the quantitative order as would be that of the molecules which can form a single whole; it is of the qualitative order for it is a question of persons who can alienate nothing of their absolute value. Their juxtaposition is always doubled by explosive virtualities which only the alliance of God and of man can surmount by an infinity of love. Outside of this, it is easy to see, the hypothesis of Bataille is of such a nature that it would not even be possible for humanity to come to such a pass. The internal forces which cause him to explode in pursuit of this unity are such that they necessarily prevent his attaining the unity.

Yet we have seen Hegel preaching faith in an atheist Church, but he had no chance of accounting for the origin of the mysterious love which is capable of collecting all men in its bosom and of substituting itself in the Mystical Body of Christ. Feuerbach and Marx also believe in the harmonious unity of humanity in the future. But this is always a mystical belief *par excellence* if one understands by that not simply an administrative unification of humanity of more or less long duration, but a communion of all spirits, without defection. It is not utopian to think that all nations will one day fuse in a single city, but it is utopian to believe that in this planetary society, even without classes, disorders will no longer be possible. From this point of view the criticism of Marxism by Bakunin is full of truth and the thought of Max Stirner is even more penetrating. The latter, in refuting anarchist optimism, shows the indefectible opposition, on this earth, of the Self of the individual and of society, no matter how perfected.

IT has often been remarked how poor and dismal are humanity's dreams of happiness. The visionaries of the modern world are hardly accustomed to linger there. Marx and Engels have carefully abstained from describing the future society and this is not only because this task is premature, it is also because these pictures of the perfect society immediately show their utopianism. On the other hand all visionaries who meditate on the future of humanity are haunted by tragic presentiments. What monsters and catastrophes there are in the anticipations of the very peaceful Jules Verne and in those of Wells, still socialist and on fire with the divinity-in-the-making. And are not the terrible

dévas of Renan much more alive than his vague deity of the future? Without doubt some will be tempted to renounce authors as "fantastic" as Verne and Wells, but what will they say to those great advocates of cruelty, Lautréamont, Sade and Nietzsche?

Nietzsche's contempt for pity, his apology for hardness, have had only too great an influence in the world for the uprooting of Christian virtues and for the dispersion of cruelty. Who would doubt this in the light of the furors which have plunged Europe into blood? It is too easy to reply that the brutes of the lower stages are not truly the disciples of a philosopher. It is easily credible that they comprehend nothing of his metaphysic and do not know how to reason on ethics, but they cultivate the grain that the philosopher has sown in the wind.

Since Lautréamont and Sade, there has been much meditation on the mystery of cruelty, notably the work of Bataille, Artaud and Malraux. Indeed there is the logical issue of the revolt. The man who hates God faces no obstacle to hating his equal. One cannot avoid being struck here by the remembrance of de Quincey's terrible cry of joy at being delivered by opium from the "tyranny of the human face." On what can the brotherhood of men be founded if they have no Father in the heavens? By virtue of what biological similitudes do they inspire a pure love?

Truly in the ideal of the superman there is a fundamental equivocation. Sometimes it appears as the height of the human, as the supreme perfection to which man can attain by his own powers, and sometimes as a frightful dehumanization of man. From this point of view the thought of Sade is very revealing:

If a man multiplies himself he is right according to himself; if he destroys himself he is wrong, always according to himself. But in the eyes of Nature all that changes: if he multiplies he is wrong, for he takes away from Nature the honor of a new phenomenon, the results of her laws being necessarily of creatures. If those who are launched do not propagate themselves, she would launch new ones and would rejoice in a faculty that she no longer possesses. (Cited by P. Klossowski, *Le mal et la négation d'autrui chez, D. A. F. de Sade*, p. 277).

"One will recognize here," writes Klossowski in his commentary, "that Sade speaks not only as a precursor of evolutionism, but also that he expresses here an idea which corresponds to certain actual conceptions of the past and present faculties of Nature in what concerns the species: is man truly an end?" (*ibid.*, p. 282.)

Besides it is almost impossible to foresee what this other end would be. Yet we might ask ourselves whether it would not be precisely the superman in so far as it is antihuman. Let us note furthermore that Sade takes a strange attitude. He takes a position in favor of Nature against man. He places himself consequently on the side of that which overwhelms man, on the side of that unknown whatever he may be who would succeed man, the Martian, the unthinkable monster of today. Klossowski also says,

The conception of nature aspiring to recover her most active power marks in fact the very dehumanization which now takes the form of a singular metaphysic... we can see there Sade's desire for the disuniting

of man by obtruding the categorical imperative of a cosmic instance which exacts the destruction of all that is human.

There are undoubtedly few works which in like manner lay bare the foundation of a certain part of the thought which is found at the source of the conception of the superman, but yet it is this thought which acts under a thousand forms, in the shelter of all kinds of metaphysics, in order to engender analogous dispositions of mind for which the greatest commandment is hatred of God, and the second and comparable commandment forbids yielding to the love of another except by caprice. Thus the thinking self awards itself a sovereign right over other creatures. It arrogates all power to itself in order to restore that omnipotence and that unchecked satisfaction which it covets.

We cannot insist too much on this remark that Pierre Klossowski adds to the preceding. The pride of the libertine inspires in him "*the right of revising the idea of man in his own person, an experimental right which it would be dangerous to grant to the common run of mortals*. Now it is the exercise of *this right of forbidden experiences* which, born of the libertine conscience, will form one of the fundamental components of the sadist conscience." (*Ibid.*, p. 278.)

There is certainly much that is true in the remarkable effort at penetration of the criminal mentality which has been attempted by a number of modern thinkers who have rid themselves of too simple conceptions and have shown what an immense role was played in the genesis of this mentality by psychic and physiological troubles and by social injustices. But to try to explain in an exhaustive way the existence of criminal impulses by such causes is to fall back into simplism. At the heart of all these circumstances, however overwhelming they may sometimes be, there acts a power of evil which is irreducibly spiritual and as such rebels at every positive attempt at cure. There is deep-set in man a hybris which nothing on earth can be certain of appeasing, something indomitable which will give the most powerful and most balanced of men a need of unbalance and of even more fantastic power.

Man sometimes feels a need of evil for evil, a desire for pure and gratuitous crime. There is also at times a terrible resolve to hazard oneself even into crime which appears to be the path toward some prodigious discovery. Joseph de Maistre has said,

Punishments are always proportioned to crimes, and crimes are always proportioned to the consciousness of the guilty; in such a way that the deluge supposes unheard of crimes and these crimes suppose consciousnesses beyond those which we possess.

Let us return to the text of Klossowski which was cited before and which adds to this phrase the penetrating comment:

Let us retain here the idea of crime-consciousness. Is it not singularly represented by the thought of Sade and more particularly by certain of his heroes? If consciousness has ended by becoming a crime, what one calls crime should then still contain the key of consciousness. Besides it is only in extending ever further the sphere of crime that the mind, reaching unheard of crimes, will recover the lost consciousness, "consciousnesses infinitely beyond those which we possess." (*Op. cit.*, p. 268.)

There exists a remarkable correspondence between the thought expressed by de Maistre and the idea underlying the old myth of Atlantis, the queen of black magic who was submerged by a deluge like that of Sacred Scripture. In fact doesn't black magic have the alliance of crime and of magic for a cornerstone? If we strip magic of all its childish and obsolete ornament will we not find in inhuman thought of the sadist type a reborn form of black magic?

A Raskolnikov does not murder an old usurer only to procure for himself the riches necessary for the free scope of his life, but at least as much to procure for himself the certitude that he is emancipated from all prejudice. Or even more, for it is not a simple question of intellectual independence and a need of burning his boats, it is also necessary to confer on himself, if I may risk this hideous word-play, a baptism of blood, in order to be born to a new life, to incorporate himself into the satanic spirit.

Thus the exaltation of the superhuman self leads to the exploration of the deepest abysses of the human heart, but it is by the very monstrosity which is uncovered there that one reaches the inhuman. One is inseparable from the other and the balance is perpetual. Michel Leiris has clearly shown this in his terribly lucid analysis:

Masochism, sadism and almost all vices are ultimately only means of feeling oneself more human, because in deeper, more abrupt relationships with the body... Thus the sight, terrible for some, of wrinkles and viscera causes us to go one step further into the meaning of the intensification of our human conscience... Humanity besides has nothing to do with happiness or with kindness. We are here very far from any idea of charity. The most atrocious visions, like the cruelest pleasures, are entirely legitimate if they contribute to the development of such a humanity. (*L'homme et son intérieur.*)

How could the denial of morality and the imperious desire of a man to make himself superman lead to any other conclusion? Happily it is far from true that all the impious in fact adopt this conclusion, but this is because they are sensible in their own depths of that moral conscience which is the messenger of divine charity. At other times it is true that the denial of morality is moved to desire of only vicarious participation in crimes, for the fate of Raskolnikov tempts but few men. It is more prudent to make himself simply a spectator of crimes; but this is the worst kind of peevish gratification, and, according to Blake, it can engender only pestilence. Even the spectacle of the usurer seen no longer in the pure mirror of a book, but bathing in her own blood inspires a justified horror, in many theorists of crime, but why then wait for this moment to return to "humanitarian feelings"?

We could understand nothing of such aberration if, alas, we did not verify in ourselves, we believers, analogous aberrations, sometimes less grievous but always more astonishing. In fact how can one believe seriously in a God of love and yet be so wanting in love oneself?

Here we must return to a capital mystery of humanity which we have considered earlier, but which now appears with new perspectives: original sin. It is this which is the source of all these follies. It is the first and greatest prototype of crime-consciousness: desire for deification by violation of the divine will.

It is there that one sees how the desire for evil is inextirpable from humanity, even by all the most perfected forms of hygiene. Adam possessed Paradise, every human perfection, immortality was assured to him, the friendship of God was his without a shadow. It is this essential element of the paradisaical situation which often eludes us. Let men pretend that if life were only happiness it would be easy for them to live. What they desire is that Paradise from which Adam was driven. Yet it is that very Paradise which weighed on Adam! What could be more fantastic? Man has known the golden age and has not wanted to keep it. Adam certainly was far from foreseeing the fatal consequence of his adventure. He did not wish to lose Paradise for a wretched condition, but Paradise appeared *insufficient* to him. No more did he will evil for evil since in his primitive innocence he could not know it, but he wished to obtain deification by braving the will of his Creator. It matters little what the mythical images of the tree and the apple signify, in any case there emanates from the story the idea that Adam willed to commit the most extreme of the faults inspired by hybris: to become God in spite of God. It is not possible to imagine more, and for this reason alone Genesis proposes the most formidable of myths in the same measure in which the God of the Bible excels in power all other conceptions of divinity.

What constitutes the fascination of this attempt of Adam and what tempts all the theophobes in the myth of the "death of God" is that they see there the highest possibility offered to the liberty of man. Yet the presence of Satan, disguised in the skin of the serpent and coiled in the blinded folds of human consciousness should suffice to dispel this illusion. Whoever thinks to escape from the Kingdom of God, the donor and guarantor of our true liberty, falls in the power of Lucifer for the worst enslavement of all. There is no neutral territory. The liberty of man is at every instant obliged to choose and to reiterate its choice here in this world.

WHAT then will be the end of the history of atheism? Such as it wills for itself. That is, it will unfold just as the godless think, outside the presence of God. God will really be "dead" for them, and they dead for Him. They will plunge ever deeper into the icy night of which Nietzsche speaks.

But it is there that will be verified all the depth of the lie of the tempter, for supermen will not become gods. On the contrary they will lose the only chance given humanity to reach deification. They will possess the immortality promised by the serpent, but in how lugubrious and sterile a night!

At the end of history the sciences of psychics, physiology and psychology having completely lain bare the mystery of the world, good and evil will be face to face in terrible nakedness. Ah yes, our first parents wished to know the mystery of good and evil, but their rash wish has been frighteningly fulfilled, for all their race has been condemned to explore these abysses of terror. At the end of history Adam would find no more forests in which to hide himself. True, as long as the judgment will not have taken place, God will not be visible, but men will have come from all places even to the bounds of the void which everywhere surrounds the created worlds and with a terrible anguish

they will question one another, unable to pierce the mystery of this wall of nothingness.

Then an ultimate struggle will take place. The most terrible of storms will rock the entire cosmos, when the wheat and the cockle of humanity will almost have completed their growth and find themselves in a fullness of strength and clarity hitherto unknown. Men will be almost in the state in which the cursed angels sinned, because of the very height to which men will have arrived, dominating all creation in the splendor of their knowledge.

Then under the ultimate effort of combat of the spiritual forces in humanity the world will explode, the sons of light climbing toward the eternal Light and the children of darkness toward the prince of darkness. Why does the Judgment come at an arbitrary hour, why does the history of humanity here below come to an end by chance at no matter what point of its rise? The action of God in history is always in accord with the rhythm of the development of humanity, and so one is led to believe it is that the very keenness of the struggle between the servants of God and the servants of Satan will become unendurable and will exhaust their ultimate powers which will provoke such a tension at the heart of humanity that the entire world will be rent asunder. In the midst of the great cataclysm infernal Babel will bury itself in darkness while the blessed multitudes will ascend to the heavenly Jerusalem. The face of the Word will reveal itself and will shine as the sun at midday.

Translated by ERWIN W. GEISSMAN

PHYSICS AND THE SCHOLASTIC THEORY OF FORM AND MATTER

JULIUS SEILER

THE scientific and technological advances of recent decades have changed the whole economic life of civilized peoples. Now, in increasing measure, these new sciences are acquiring recognition in the intellectual world, and press toward open debate with the philosophy of nature of Aristotle and the scholastics. Because of this development, our philosophy of nature is, as is generally known, today passing through a crisis. How did this all come about?

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The middle ages knew no distinction between an empirical and a philosophical investigation of nature. All phenomena were considered and understood in terms of Aristotle's categories. The representatives of modern natural science have from the beginning been in conscious opposition to the traditional teaching on nature. In the proud advance that followed their successes, they paid little heed to the old philosophy of nature, whose advocates sought to clarify the relation between the empirical and philosophical views of nature. Since the Age of Enlightenment, the latter have allotted to physics the investigation of observable phenomena, i.e., the explanation in terms of "proximate causes," and reserved to themselves the discussion of the essences of things and the understanding of "ultimate causes."

This division is, thus, not the result of a natural development or of a peaceful agreement. Although natural philosophy and experimental investigation both treat an extensive common subject matter, there has never been close collaboration or discussion between them. Even the scholastics now grant that this situation cannot last and should not be tolerated further. All this explains the fact that today the natural philosophy of scholastic authors is scarcely known or recognized outside the circle of its own advocates, and that even within this little circle, it suffers from profound differences of opinion.

To throw light on the strained relations between the two sciences, we may go further into two questions. How are we to explain the fact that 1) there is such an enormous variety of substances, and that 2) in certain processes the substances change their character and alter their natures? These questions faced the Greeks from the beginning of their speculations on nature; they remain today the most important problems. Almost all scholastic writers of recent decades point out that there are only three theories that claim to explain the variety and mutability of substances. These three are: mechanism, dynamism, and hylomorphism, or the doctrine of matter and form.

Mechanism seeks to explain matter in terms of minute, indivisible particles. It would derive all the characteristics and modes of behavior of substances from the different shapes, grouping and motion of these particles. According to dynamism, the ultimate elements of body are to be thought of merely as points, endowed with forces of attraction and repulsion. The third theory, that of matter and form, also claims to answer the two problems raised. What is of special significance is that it is bound up with fundamental questions about being and a theory of knowledge. Hence many will regard our questions as the crucial problems of all philosophy of nature.

Up until a few decades ago, you could indeed assert with some reason that only the three theories mentioned offered a possibility of solving the problems outlined. Since then the situation has changed. Today, neither mechanism nor dynamism is upheld by anyone. But now hylomorphism faces a new rival. It is now the physicist who claims that he can explain the characteristics and nature of matter, together with the totality of events in inanimate nature. Whatever was correct in mechanism and dynamism has been completely absorbed into physics, which has meanwhile superseded both of them.

Since hylomorphism is regarded as the fateful question for the scholastic theory of nature, and since physics promises to provide a solution to the same problem, thorough discussion between the two theories is today one of the most pressing tasks. This may not be as simple as the debate with mechanism and dynamism. We will outline the theories about the world of lifeless matter as propounded by both hylomorphism and physics, and then compare the two.

The Theory of Matter and Form

THE scholastic theory is the application to the things of our world of experience of the doctrine of potency and act. All substances are regarded as consisting of prime matter and substantial form. Prime matter was originally conceived as absolutely indefinite, undetermined and hence as unknowable. In practice however, no one consistently treated prime matter as strictly indeterminate. Even Aristotle was constrained to certain concessions; and according to the modern conception, all those physical characteristics that are common to all material things are to be traced back to prime matter. In it we see the basis for spatial extension, and with that, the source of all the characteristics derived from it. Substantial form bestows on matter and hence on substances the determinate nature, the specific essence. Besides, the various capacities, the ability for positive action, the purposive behavior, the conformity to nature, all these are due to the form.

The reasons adduced in behalf of this doctrine are crucial both for an understanding and for an appraisal of it. Among the most common reasons are: the observed substantial changes imply a persisting passive element and a changing active element. The opposing attributes of substances, *e.g.*, the capacity to act vs. the capacity to be acted on; or substantial unity vs. spatial multiplicity, etc., demand the adoption of two corresponding fundamental principles. Finally, since there are many individuals of the same type, it is postu-

lated that, along with the type or form common to all, there is an "individuating" element or principle. It should be noted here that there is no single proof for hylomorphism that is not rejected by one or the other leading advocates of this theory.

We now have an indication of what questions the theory wishes to answer. It wants to explain how a substantial unity can arise from a whole of adjacent parts, how there can be many individuals within one class, how the multiplicity of bodily types can be reduced to just so many forms. It explains the essential attributes of specific substances as the effects of form, while the characteristics common to all bodies it attributes to matter. "Substantial changes," including those involving molecular and nuclear processes, are thought of as changes in substantial form. The upholders of the theory of matter and form accept its solutions to all these problems as ultimate explanations, not to be superseded, since matter and form are considered the simplest and most general principles.

The only reference some scholastic thinkers make to the physical sciences is to remark that empirical investigation could never arrive at a solution of our questions. Thus it is said the physicist merely investigates how molecules and atoms are put together from the elementary material particles; he does not try to trace matter back to the final and simplest metaphysical principles of being. The scientist has no ambition to give an ultimate and thorough-going explanation. The essential unity of substances eludes him altogether, for he sees them only as aggregates. He is not concerned with substantial change. At most, he is in a position to determine the sequence in time of differing kinds of substances, but not to explain the manner in which one kind comes from another. The physicist, they say, cannot explain the characteristics of substances; he attempts at most a mechanistic description. Thus, for example, C. Boyer¹ declares the following attributes physically inexplicable: the constancy and stability of the atom, also the uniformity of mass, volume, electrical charge, spectra, and behavior of atoms of the same element. In any case, it is claimed, there is a deeper understanding of the characteristic properties that remains hidden from the physicist.

In this connection, the scholastic writers also express their ideas on the relation between physics and natural philosophy. In their view, the two sciences differ in their subject matter, or more precisely, in their formal objects. The physical sciences are allotted the external phenomena of matter as their field of inquiry, while natural philosophy is given the essences of things and the ultimate causes. Or the limits are drawn so that the "accidental or superficial" is contrasted with the "substantial or profound." By setting up such boundaries it is hoped to prevent conflicts between the two fields and to protect each side from encroachment by the other. The notion of their strict separation has recently become an integral part of the theory of matter and form.

The Solution of our Questions by Physics

LET us see now how the physicists answer our two questions, why there is a multitude of different kinds of substances, and how "substantial change" can be explained. Here again we can only give a brief, sketchy presentation. There

are two possible paths of procedure: either we might indicate how in the course of time inductive investigation has reached the present knowledge, or we could explain deductively how the whole complex of matter and processes can be understood on the basis of a very few premises and the most general laws. This second way may be the more instructive and so it will be followed.

The ultimate and smallest building blocks of matter are the elementary particles, the proton, neutron, electron, etc. They differ in mass, charge, and stability, and are not to be thought of, say, as fixed and unchangeable particles, since they display a wave-like as well as a corpuscular nature. They are to be regarded as the products of elemental processes and can themselves be again transformed.

The atomic nucleus contains protons and neutrons. Since protons and neutrons have practically the same weight, the total weight of the nucleus is a whole number. Combinational mathematics can conceive of an immense array of different combinations of protons and neutrons. In nature, however, only about 300 types of nuclei occur as stable structures. That is, only those combinations of protons and neutrons actually exist that satisfy certain very definite conditions. The most important of these is that the repulsive forces of the positive charges of the protons must be balanced by the so-called nuclear binding forces. This however presumes the presence of an equal or greater number of neutrons.

The series of stable nuclei reaches its upper limit with the element bismuth, with an atomic number of 83, and an atomic weight of 209. This nucleus consists of 83 protons and 126 neutrons. It sets the limit of stable nuclei, because beyond it the repulsive forces exceed the nuclear binding forces. In addition to the 300 stable nuclei mentioned, there is a still greater number of unstable or radio-active nuclei. These lack the inner equilibrium necessary for union, since the electrical repulsive forces exceed the binding forces. Equilibrium is again reached only by the expulsion of one another particle. Through this so-called radio-active process, the unstable nucleus is transformed into one of the 300 stable types. The radio-active nuclei occurring naturally are those with atomic numbers from 84 to 92, and a few lighter ones.

For the reason why protons and neutrons combine at all in the nucleus, we must recall a natural law of extensive significance: nature everywhere shows a tendency to reduce potential energy to a minimum. The 300 stable nuclear types are just those among the countless conceivable combinations of protons and neutrons that have a lower potential energy in the combined state than in the uncombined state. The proof for this is given by precise measurements which show that the mass of stable nuclei is less than the corresponding sum of the masses of the uncombined protons and neutrons; and mass, as we know, is equivalent to energy. There is still more. The abundances of different stable nuclei vary widely. It is found that nuclei occur more often, the lower their energy. Thus the rule of minimum potential energy explains the union of protons and neutrons in the atomic nucleus.

The naturally occurring combinations of protons and neutrons are the nuclei of the 92 kinds of atoms, i.e., the chemical elements. What decides the characteristics of an element is its total positive charge; in other words, the

number of its protons. There are thus generally several different nuclear species belonging to the same chemical element. These related nuclei are called isotopes. The isotopes of any one element contain the same number of protons but differ in the number of their neutrons.

In a neutral atom, the nucleus is surrounded by a cloud of just as many electrons, negatively charged, as the nucleus contains positively charged protons. The distinctive properties of each atomic type of chemical element are determined by the way the electrons are arranged around the nucleus. This arrangement is known in detail for all the atoms from hydrogen to uranium. Electrons and their behavior are evidently not easily visualized, since they exhibit the properties of waves as well as those of particles. But for the sake of simplicity, we can in the present treatment represent them as small particles. We can think of these electrons as circling around the nucleus in orbits or "shells." For hydrogen, the lightest atom, there is one electron, travelling in the inner shell. Helium, the second element, possesses two electrons, moving in the same inner shell. In the heavier elements, other shells are filled successively, up to a total of six shells. The second shell has place for 8 electrons, the third for 18, etc.

The rule for constructing the whole system of elements is the so-called "exclusion principle," or Pauli principle, postulated by Pauli in 1925. It specifies how many electrons can revolve in each shell, and what configuration the electrons adopt in each atom. In order to explain this principle, we recall: the energy level of every single electron in the atom is quantized in four different respects. Each atomic electron state is given four quantum numbers; they describe the fact that the angular momentum of the electron is a multiple of the fundamental quantum of action. This four-fold quantization is a result of the wave character of the electron. The Pauli principle can now be stated simply as: two electrons in an atom can never have all four quantum numbers the same. With this rule, together with the requirement that the electrons occupy the levels of lowest energy, the arrangement of electrons and hence the characteristic properties of the elements are uniquely determined.

A whole series of properties of the elements are determined by the state of the outer electron shell; such as the chemical valence, the spectra, the melting and boiling points, and the atomic diameter. Hence, throughout the system of elements, there recur, with the filling of each new shell, elements with characteristics similar to those in the preceding and following groups. Thus the system of elements is periodic. So the physicist today is in a position to deduce directly from a very few simple postulates that there is a unified system of elements, that this system is periodic, and that each element possesses quite definite attributes.

Substances as we know them occur mostly as chemical compounds. These too can be explained by simple laws. The general rule is: atoms combine chemically if the energy of the compound is less than that of the uncombined elements, and the greater the energy difference, the more stable the compound. The number of known chemical compounds is at least half a million; actually there are probably many times that number. Among them are compounds whose molecules consist of tens of thousands of atoms. This immense variety of sub-

stances is today explainable, if not perfectly, at least in great part, in terms of the properties of individual atoms and their mutual interactions.

entropy
It is worth while, in this connection, to return to the energy rule mentioned. This law, according to which nature everywhere strives for a minimum of potential energy, is only one aspect of a more comprehensive law, the law of energy degradation. It embraces in fact the well known entrophy-law, i.e., the striving of nature to "devalue" states of high energy through spatial dispersion. This double tendency of nature is the origin of all spontaneous natural processes; it is actually the *law of events* in the realm of the inanimate nature. Nuclear actions and chemical processes are only two important special types of occurrences for which the rule of energy degradation is controlling.

The rule of energy degradation can consequently also be designated the law of natural existence. All static conditions and persisting characteristics, as well as the essential attributes of substances have this character of permanence only since in them the minimum of potential energy, aimed at by the initiating process, has been reached; the process is therefore finished. Everything persisting is the terminal state of energy minimizing processes.

** disorder*
The whole history of cosmic events from the beginning down to today is understandable in the light of this law. As a degradation process, it is a non-recurring, a directed event, that tends to the so-called "thermal death." As can be calculated on the basis of radio-activity, the cosmic process must have begun about 5 billion years ago, in great turbulence.

Surveying the power of physical theories, we can note in summary: every explanation of the physical sciences proceeds from assumptions and seeks to explain a problem on the basis of these assumptions. These assumptions include certain constants fixed by nature, as e.g., the elementary particles, the existing stock of energy and mass, and a few laws of a very general nature. Through them we can account for the unified system of elements, with their characteristics, the hundreds of thousands of chemical compounds with their essential attributes, the processes and states within the range of our experience, the present state of the universe, etc. The postulates themselves that are to be taken as original data remain unexplained, whether on principle or just for the time being. What is explainable, and what (for the present) remains inexplicable can be specified in each case.

COMPARISON AND APPRAISAL OF THE TWO THEORIES

Is there a common goal?

ACCORDING to the leading advocates of hylomorphism, there are no common questions for whose solution philosophy and science might labor. It is denied that science has an interest in or competence for the discussion of those problems treated by the philosophers. According to Matthias Schneid—to single out a well known representative of an earlier generation of scholastics—science neither can nor does it seek answer, among others, the following questions: "Whence the elements? Whence the atoms? . . . Why do atoms combine with this or that substance in just such proportions and by certain rules?"²

According to P. Hoenen, S.J., the laws governing chemical combinations can only be understood in terms of hylomorphism.³

We grant that the physicist is not interested in all the questions that the advocate of hylomorphism wants to solve. On the other hand it is just as certain that the physicist claims to explain the attributes of substances as well as the differences of type and so-called substantial changes. In 1890, of course, when Schneid wrote his philosophy of nature, the physicist could not yet answer the questions "whence the elements? Why do atoms combine in just these proportions and according to certain laws?" But today physicists can answer these questions. And they can explain chemical valence, atomic weights, and other important characteristics of matter. Everyone sufficiently acquainted with hylomorphism and with physics must therefore admit that there is a series of significant questions posed in the same sense by both sides. We are thus faced with the surprising fact that while two sciences are concerned with the same problems, their theories and solutions bear no clear relation to each other. For the philosopher this is truly a disturbing finding.

A few scholastics imagine the relation between the sciences to be such that the philosopher offers a metaphysical answer to the common problems, while the physicist advances an answer based on physical science. Let us test this conception. In scholastic thought metaphysics is usually regarded as the science of immaterial things, i.e., as the science of being as such, and of immaterial essences. Hylomorphism however is directly concerned not with mental or immaterial things, but on the contrary it strives to offer an explanation of material things. Moreover, the theory is not occupied with being as such or with its most general laws, but rather with the special field of being that is the world of substances. Indeed prime matter implies on the one hand a contrast to the immaterial, and on the other hand (as the source of individuation) to the universal. Hylomorphism is not concerned with a more universal subject than the most general laws of nature. No one can remove our two questions from the scope of physics by simply asserting that hylomorphism is a metaphysical theory.

Therefore we must also reject the "two strata" theory advocated by some. According to it, there is in the things of nature a physical (superficial, accidental), stratum of being, with which the physical sciences are concerned; beyond or beneath it there is supposed to be a metaphysical (substantial, basic) stratum of being, the subject of the philosophy of nature. All objects can be viewed metaphysically, i.e., from the general view point of being; accident as well as substance, phenomenon as well as essence. For the same questions, put in the same way, always to be answered differently for the physical than for the metaphysical stratum of being, does not seem to make good sense.

To what extent do the two sciences offer a real explanation of the phenomena?

ALONG with genuine solutions of course, there are also those that are merely seeming solutions. By the explanation of a fact, the scholastics generally mean tracing it back to its ultimate reason or cause. A satisfactory explana-

tion should make clear how something comes about as a result of certain assumptions or causes.

As we already noted, the advocates of hylomorphism express the view that the physical sciences do not fulfil these requirements, but content themselves with simple determinations of fact. Thus for example, A. Padberg writes: "The physicist confirms that something is thus and so; but in no way does he give . . . a real explanation of why it has to be thus and so."⁴ An authoritative scholastic thinker has even gone so far as to compare the theories of physical science with the "explanation" of the narcotic effect of opium as due to a "sleep-producing power." In contrast they see in the derivation of the properties of matter from the substantial forms a complete and satisfactory explanation.

It has already been explained that such a notion is incorrect. We need only recall the periodic system of elements. We grant certainly that the non-specialist to whom the concepts and methods of physics are not sufficiently known, may have an impression of incompleteness when confronted with the theories of physics. But anyone who has the necessary training and is familiar with the physical sciences will not deny that they do offer real explanations.

Since the philosophers criticize so severely the physicist's mode of explanation, the physicist might in his turn point out that the hylomorphic derivation of characteristics is always satisfied with a simple statement that the characteristics follow from the substantial form. Hylomorphism must, however, give up on principle all claim to demonstrate *how* they follow. How, for instance, would the chemical inertness of the noble gases be deduced from their substantial forms? How would the relation between atomic number and x-ray spectrum be accounted for? How would the law of disintegration and the disintegration time of radio-active substances be predicted from forms?

From the manner in which most scholastic authors try to establish hylomorphism, it is evident that they equate physical explanations with those of classical physics, when they do not actually equate them with the old mechanism. This follows from the fact mentioned, that they defend their teaching against mechanism and dynamism, but overlook altogether the special character of modern physics, which has superseded both of those older theories.

Scholastics as a rule emphasize that the physicist overlooks the "substantial unity" of substances and hence cannot explain it. As we have said, by the substantial unity they mean the fact that the molecules (or the larger bodies) are not identical with the simple sum of atoms (or molecules), but represent unities of a higher order, in which the independence of the individual particles is swallowed up. They then assert that the physicist with his theoretical means is able only to determine the aggregate of atoms, and that the "substantial unity" resulting from that aggregate escapes him.

To which we rejoin: first of all, it does not follow, simply because he neither uses nor is acquainted with the concept of substantial unity, that the physicist conceives the molecule as an accidental unity, as a mere sum of atoms. The unity in question is neither closer nor looser than what is apparent in the behavior and in the properties of the chemical compound. It must be denied that the physicist overlooks any characteristic of substance that permits conclusions concerning the basis and nature of the unity. The sum of attributes observed by the physicist is the perfectly equivalent expression for what the

scholastic calls "substantial unity." Besides, the physicist is able to deduce this sort of unity, down to its details, from his basic postulate. Indeed, he can even state the degree of stability of such a compound, and so, in a manner of speaking, the degree of unity.

The observed facts as foundation for speculation

THE first task of every science is the determination of the phenomena. Hence it is important on the one hand that the widest possible survey of the data of experience be made, and on the other that all subjective preconceptions of the problem be excluded from the outset. Most advocates of hylomorphism believe they can be content with the experiences of ordinary everyday life, and can dispense with the results of scientific investigations. This is equivalent to the view that the segments of reality perceived directly by our senses offer a sufficiently broad basis for a philosophy of nature. Yet it cannot be denied that science has expanded the field of our experience in a startling manner. It has through numerous "artificial senses," introduced us to wholly new realms of nature; the microcosm, the macrocosm, and the non-perceptible realities of intermediate dimensions. But all these worlds form together with the world of direct experience a whole of mutually reacting parts. The theory of matter and form however restricts itself to the perceivable substances of our modest earthly viewpoint. The newly discovered realms do not merely set new philosophical problems before us; they also offer entirely unexpected possibilities for solving both old and newly posed questions. Recall the relation between light and matter, between energy and material processes, matter, waves, etc. Are these realities less important in the whole of nature than the visible substances? Can the philosopher overlook all this with impunity?

The range of phenomena utilized by hylomorphism as its basis is an abridged section of reality. Further, the starting data seem all too much permeated with subjective concepts. The very important questions of secondary qualities are, because of their extensive ramifications, here passed over. We merely cite a few examples of how easily the actual data can be distorted by a subjective approach. An investigator supposes he can satisfactorily determine certain essential properties as, say, the transparency of certain substances, by simple observation. In this he overlooks the fact that the transparency so determined is valid only for that narrow section of the spectrum that is visible light. The property is determined ultimately by the limits of sensitivity of a subjective organ. Another example: one conceives of the states of matter on the earth, where atoms combine to form molecules, as "natural in a higher degree" than, e.g., on the fixed stars, where there are no chemical compounds. What right have we to call the terrestrial energy states the "natural," when all the evidence indicates that only a vanishingly small part of the matter in the universe exists in this temperature range? While earlier thinkers conceived of differences in states of aggregation as essential, modern advocates of hylomorphism regard them as accidental. This is a justified concession to the physicist's way of thinking, but at the same time it is also a break with the scholastic principle that

external appearances determine whether a given change is essential or accidental. For the distinction between essential and accidental properties, we have to rely chiefly on subjective valuation and plain feeling. An objective criterion is never offered for this critical distinction.

Problems that cannot be solved by hylomorphism

THE question now arises: what relations do naturally occurring substances bear to each other? Do they, in their nature, manifest any reaction; do they together form a uniform system? Is there any natural system of substantial forms?

We know the physicist's answer. According to him, there is such a unified system of elements, and that by nature. He demonstrates from simple postulates that only these stable elements can be found in the whole cosmos. Moreover, he shows that the unity of the system of matter can be made comprehensible by no other explanation. An imposing structure of hundreds of thousands of chemical compounds arises on the foundation of the periodic system. It is a well-ordered and reasonable system of atomic combinations, though a more complicated system than that of the elements.

How well does hylomorphism succeed in answering this question? In all the literature on the theory of matter and form, the question about a unified system does not seem to be raised or to be regarded as a problem. It is also, on the basis of scholastic theory, quite out of the question to make the huge number of substantial forms understandable from a few principles. Hylomorphism is thus a teaching that must tolerate an enormous number of ultimate and irreducible basic principles.

To answer that hylomorphism traces the whole multiplicity of material beings and events back to two fundamental principles would be, to say the least, misleading. For hylomorphism, as the teaching on matter and *a* form, is an abstraction. *That* hylomorphism, on the contrary, that is to be a solution to concrete questions, is the teaching on matter and the *many* forms. But a theory that has to operate with such a large number of irreducible and ultimate principles is neither a simple nor a metaphysical theory. If hylomorphism can claim to trace back all substances to two elements, matter and form, the physicist has an equal right to assert that he can explain everything from just two principles: i.e., from laws and from energy (or mass, a special form of energy). What shall the philosopher answer, if the scientists object: "We have counted your substantial forms; there are perhaps over a million of them. Therefore we ask you a new question. We have succeeded in arranging this immense profusion of forms into a system and explaining their ordering principle. From this we can deduce that there must be just these forms and can be no others. The most general laws of nature permit us to look beyond your forms and to explain their diversity."

With that a further problem is hinted at; that of the laws of nature. In scholasticism these are thought of as modes of behavior that are specified by the substantial form, and hence by the specific character of the substance. Such an attempt at explanation takes into consideration only the specific, i.e., the

laws valid for individual species of substances. These laws are of course traced back to just as many forms as there are "specifically different" kinds of substances. The most significant natural laws are, however, precisely the most universal and comprehensive, that apply to large groups or all classes of substances. For these laws of nature, so important because of their universality, no place is found in hylomorphic theory; that teaching must overlook them. To what particular forms can, e.g., those general laws be traced back that explain the periodic system, which in scholastic terms would be thus the system of forms? Finally, the defenders of the theory of matter and form are by and large content, even for the specific laws, with simply indicating that just these laws follow from these forms. In no case is it shown *how* the laws are to be deduced from the forms. Hence neither can the theory provide any satisfactory explanation for specific laws.

The relation of hylomorphic and physical explanations

HOW now is hylomorphism to be rated in comparison with the physical sciences? Does it, in spite of all these difficulties, offer a solution to the problems raised, or is it outmoded by the physical sciences?

In so far as hylomorphism seeks an answer to our questions, it is to be regarded as a theory that expresses in summary manner what the physicist renders in detail through the laws of nature. The scholastic teaching is as it were a broad but non-committal framework, and the physical sciences can be a picture filling it with concrete knowledge. No objection can be offered to the basic thinking of the doctrine of matter and form, nor can any be offered to the application of the act-potency theory to substances. But when the theory claims to offer an adequate solution to our problems, it is claiming too much. This criticism leaves intact the validity of the teaching on potency and act; it merely states that the application of that teaching to the special division of being that comprises material things does not in itself represent the desired explanation. The doctrine of matter and form, as developed by the traditional proofs, seems in fact to be as little a solution to the problems in question as the general validity of the principle of causality implies the explanation of any given effect. Or just as little as the recognition of a universal criterion of truth guarantees the truth of individual statements. The teaching of the physical sciences makes transparent the opaque Aristotelian forms. In order to make these accessible to a fuller understanding it was necessary to go beyond the Aristotelian concepts and express ourselves in that language that nature itself requires for a deeper grasp of the forms themselves. If we wish to regard the theory of matter and form as the laying out of a program, then the physical sciences are the realization of this program. If we think of it as looking towards the goal, then the work of the physical sciences is the achievement of that goal. Hylomorphism thus remains a profound program, the focusing of our eyes on a goal proposed for us.

This evaluation of hylomorphism refers primarily to inanimate nature. The world of living being stands out against lifeless nature precisely because

there we meet an agent with purposive, self-determined action. The agent carries clearly the principles determining the matter. We cannot decide in advance how or in what sense the construct of matter and form can actually be realized in the biological field or what problems it can solve there.

Natural philosophy and the natural sciences

IN addition to the relation between scholastic and physical teaching just discussed, there is also the question of the relation between natural philosophy and natural science. For the treatment of this question, we can proceed in either of two ways. We can start with the assumption that the two do not strive for a common goal and thus readily achieve a clear separation between the two. The question remains if those interested in this definition bother to define the concepts. Or else we can presume that the two sciences represent the two living movements, and that the upholders of each have full view of their own technical field, and therefore specify the natures and goals of their sciences. Such independent definitions avoid the danger of crowding the opposing party, and yet they reflect the goals and domains of both sides in an unobjectionable manner. We would not expect in this case that the fields of interest would remain sharply divided.

Scholastic philosophers proceed in the first way. To describe the relation between the two sciences, they use the formula, already mentioned several times, that allots to natural philosophy the explanations based on the most profound and ultimate reasons, and to natural science, on the other hand, explanations in terms of proximate causes. This concept is correct to the extent that natural science is in fact interested in proximate causes, in phenomena, and in the quantitative generally. It must be admitted that formerly, in its beginnings, in its undeveloped, immature phase, research could only grasp superficial traits; the deeper connections and ultimate causes had to remain hidden to it. But in its present advancing phase, natural science does not deal merely in superficial phenomena. As we have emphasized, everyone must recognize that modern research has discovered basic characteristics and ultimate relationships. We admit again that natural science neither seeks to nor can uncover all the root causes and connections, but only those that its special methods enable it to grasp. The mutual relation between the two sciences is thus not so simple as we often imagine. The scientist is unaware of the scholastic demarcation, and if he should learn of it, he would not be concerned about it. Only he who has a clear view of the goals and the possibilities of both sciences and approaches the question without any bias can do justice to both disciplines.

A FEELING of insecurity is clearly evident today in the attitude of scholastic natural philosophy toward the physical sciences. This insecurity can only be banished when scholastic thinkers conquer their aversion to scientific studies. Only when they have a thorough knowledge of the physical sciences can they form their own judgments on the difficult questions, and be able to preserve

their independence and distance from the traditional concepts. This is just the urgent challenge of the far sighted Pope Leo XIII, who towards the end of his encyclical on Christian philosophy, *Aeterni Patris*, recalled to modern philosophers the motto of earlier thinkers: "Nothing is more useful to a philosopher than to investigate diligently the secrets of nature and to make a long, careful study of physics."

Translated by JOHN DOEBELE

NOTES

¹ *Cursus Philosophiae*, I. 492, Paris, 1935.

² *Naturphilosophie im Geiste des hl. Thomas v Aquin*,³ Paderborn 1890, 3.

³ *Cosmologia*,³ Romae 1945, 413.

⁴ *Ueber den Begriff und die Geltung der Naturgesetze*, Bottrop i. W., 1935, 25.

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ON THE TRAGIC

MAX SCHELER

IN the following we will speak of no particular art in which the tragic is portrayed. It is impossible to arrive at the phenomenon of the tragic through the art product alone, although the results of examining its extant forms might be most fruitful in discovering what it really is. The tragic is rather an essential element of the universe itself. The material made use of by the art product and the tragedian must contain beforehand the dark strain of this element. To determine what makes a tragedy genuine we must first have as precise a notion as possible of the phenomenon.

It is doubtful whether the tragic is essentially an esthetic phenomenon. We are speaking of life and history in general without placing ourselves in any particular esthetic circumstance, no matter how unusually full of tragic events and circumstances. The question of how the tragic works on our emotions or of how we come to "enjoy" the tragic in some art form we are purposely avoiding. These things can not tell us what the tragic is. The usual "psychological" method of observation, proceeding from the investigation of the experiences of one observing a tragic incident to its "objective understanding," tries to discover and describe the evocations of these experiences. Such a method avoids the issue rather than clarifies it.¹ It tells us only what the tragic does, not what it is. The tragic is above all a property which we observe in events, fortunes, characters, and the like, and which actually exists in them. We might say that it is given off by them like a heavy breath, or seems like an obscure glimmering that surrounds them. In it a specific feature of the world's makeup appears before us, and not a condition of our own ego, nor its emotions, nor its experience of compassion and fear. What goes on in the observer of the tragic as he feels this heavy breath and sees this shimmering darkness that encircles the head of the "tragic hero" is not related to his ability to understand this phenomenon by using his own symbolical way of looking at this feature in the world's makeup. There are people who are blind, or half blind, to the tragic—like Raphael, Goethe, and Maeterlinck.² One must know what the tragic is to depict this experience. Moreover, the experience is historically far more variable than the tragic itself. A tragedy of Aeschylus arouses entirely different emotions today than in his time, although the tragic is just as perceptible to both ages.

The mental processes of understanding the tragic, the inner perception of how it is brought to us, are to be distinguished from what one experiences

Max Scheler is an internationally renowned philosopher who is often mentioned in the United States, but is rarely read, his works not yet having been translated into English. He is the author of THE NATURE AND FORMS OF SYMPATHY and DER FORMALISMUS IN DER ETHIK UND DIE MATERIALE WERTETHIK. The present essay is taken from VOM UMSTURZ DER WERTE, vol. I (Der Neue Geist-Verlag Dr. Peter Reinhold, Leipzig, 1923).

in observing the tragic. This is not the same as the "experience" theory of the tragic. It has nothing to do with depicting the way it works on us psychologically. However, the former places the problem close to the essence of the tragic and its essential manifestations. Consequently, it should not be disregarded.

How then should we proceed? Should we indiscriminately gather together examples of the tragic, selecting those events that impress men as being such, and then ask what they possess in common? This would be a method of induction that would lend itself well to experimental support. Yet this would bring us only to the observation of our own ego when the tragic works upon us. What right have we to trust men when they call something tragic? A plurality of opinion does not help here. Without knowledge of what the tragic is, must we be forced to decide between the opinions that have weight and those which do not? But even taking this for granted, we would still have to justify ourselves. We would have a confused mass that we would call tragic. What would the common element be that would justify this judgment of ours? Nothing more than the fact that they are all called tragic.

All induction would presuppose that one knows beforehand what the essence of the tragic is, and not just what events are tragic. Our method of procedure will be different. The few examples and statements of others that may be given are not to serve as the basis for abstracting by induction a concept of the tragic. They will rather give us some rough draft in which to see the basic use of the word and the phenomenon expressed therein, without taking into account who uses the word and to what intent. They will provide the basis for seeing in what experience this phenomenon comes to its given state. We do not assume that the examples are facts in which the tragic adheres as a property. They are only something which will contain the basic manifestations of the tragic. They will provide us with the opportunity of searching out these manifestations and finally of arriving at the tragic itself. It is not a question here of proofs but of indications or signs.

One should also guard against treating the tragic as a phenomenon with its own metaphysical, religious, and otherwise speculative interpretations. The tragic is not the result of an interpretation of the world and the important events of the world. It is a fixed and powerful impression that certain things make and one which can itself be subjected to many different interpretations. Theories like that which Maeterlinck proposes, basically the theory of every Rationalism and Pantheism, are totally wrong. According to these theories the tragic is the result of a false and unstable interpretation of the world. The tragic is attributed to the ways of thinking in uncivilized times with uncontrolled emotions. Or it is a sort of sudden bewilderment in the face of the defects of the world against which one knows of no help, or—what is the simple consequence of this as stated by Maeterlinck—no helper is at hand, no helper to put the matter in order. They obscure rather than clarify the essence of the tragic; their own outlook and times prevent them from seeing it. We, however, reason that these interpretations of the world are wrong because they have no place for the undeniable fact of the tragic and that any age which does not perceive it is insignificant.

Metaphysical interpretations of the tragic are most interesting. But the phenomenon itself is taken for granted by them. Certain metaphysicians like

Eduard von Hartmann make God Himself the tragic hero. Others think the tragic lies only on the surface of things and that underneath all tragedies lies an imperceptible harmony, into which they are finally resolved. But to know where the tragic has its source, whether in the basic structure of existence or in human passions and unrest, is to know already what the tragic is.

Every interpretation fails before the inflexibility of reality which reduces it to silence.

This question of the tragic is only one example of the importance of contrasting the changing whims of the times with the facts of reality.

The Tragic and Values

ALL that can be called tragic is contained within the realm of values and their relationships.

In a universe free of values, such as that constructed by mechanical physics, there are no tragedies.

Only where there is high and low, nobleman and peasant, is there anything like a tragic event.

The tragic is not a value like beautiful, ugly, good, or bad. The tragic appears in objects only through the interplay of their inherent values.

It is always founded on values or connected with values. To repeat, it is found only in that realm where there are objects of value and where these work in one way or another on each other.

Serenity, sadness, grandeur, and earnestness can be classified among the more tranquil values. The tragic is absent here. It appears in the realm of changing values and circumstances. Something must happen for it to appear. There must be a period of time in which something is lost or destroyed.

In empty space—Schiller notwithstanding—dwells much sublimity, but not the tragic. In a spaceless world the tragic might be possible, but never in a timeless world. In its basic connotations the tragic always implies a determined effectiveness in doing and in suffering. The tragic "character" remains such only as long as he has the necessary dispositions for tragic acting and suffering. Even a situation calling for opposition of forces or their reconciliation is only tragic as long as it contains this effectiveness. If the tragic is to appear, however, this effectiveness must take on a definite direction, a direction toward the annihilation of a positive value in a determined hierarchy. The strength which annihilates it must possess this value itself.

To belong to the category of the tragic some value must be destroyed. With regard to man it does not have to be his existence or his life. But at least something of his must be destroyed—a plan, a desire, a power, a possession, a faith. The destruction as such is not tragic. It is rather the course that an object of lower or equal positive values, never of higher values, is able to force upon it. We can hardly call it tragic for a good man to defeat and bring about the downfall of an evil man, nor for a nobleman to do the same to a peasant. Moral approval precludes a tragic impression here. This much is certain. It is

also certain that it must be an object of high positive value that destroys a value. (Values such as the honest with respect to the wicked, the good with regard to the bad, and the beautiful compared to the ugly, are here called positive. All values have this opposition and duality, even excluding their degree of "higher" and "lower.") The tragic is apparent only where the strength to destroy a higher positive value proceeds from an object possessing this positive value. The manifestation is, moreover, purest and clearest where objects of equally high value appear to undermine and ruin each other. Those tragedies most effectively portray the tragic phenomenon in which, not only is every one in the right, but where each person and power in the struggle presents an equally superior right, or appears to fulfill an equally superior duty. If an object of higher positive value, let us take for example a good, just man, is overpowered by some insignificant evil object, the tragic is at once senseless and irrational. In place of arousing tragic pity, it arouses painful indignation. Tragic pity can never fall completely into the depths of pain and disgust, but must maintain some semblance of coolness and calmness.

The tragic is first of all a struggle that is occasioned in an object of high positive value, i.e., of a high moral nature, generally treating of the family, marriage, or the state. The tragic is a "conflict" which takes place between the positive value and the very object which possesses it. The great art of the tragedian is to set each value of the conflicting elements in its fullest light, to develop completely the intrinsic rights of each party.

On the Tragic and Grief

IT is true that in some way all tragic events are sad, but in a very definite sense. This is precisely what fate is, an event surrounded by this quality of sadness.³ On the other hand it arouses sorrow in the feelings of men. It makes the soul sad.

Not all sad persons are tragic characters, however. Every death is sad and makes those left behind sad as well, but assuredly not every death is tragic. Let us disregard for a moment that type of grief that is produced in us independently of any perception of values, almost as if caused by a "neutral" feeling. We would rather consider the "grieved over something." The nature of a certain event arouses our sentiments and produces this feeling in us. It should not appear to be caused by our individual wishes or aims, but only by the worth of the object. The tragic grief has a double characteristic, one rooted in itself, the other in its subject.

This kind of grief is free from all indignation, anger, reproach, and that accompanying the desire "if it had only been otherwise." It is a calm, quiet fullness; a special kind of peace and composure is characteristic of it.

The atmosphere of tragic grief will be absent if we are aroused to do something about it. Once the event has been completed and brought to its climax, any indication of a compromise or of some chance to avert the catastrophe makes tragic grief impossible.

Tragic grief contains a definite composure. It is thus distinguished from all specifically personal griefs, those which come from a personal experience of being "sad about something." It comes to us from the outside through the soul; it is occasioned by events that are "tragic." The tragedies of Aeschylus show especially well how to awaken this atmosphere of grief in its utmost purity.

We will not point out the twofold characteristic feature of the tragic which causes this atmosphere. One is the very nature of the world's makeup; every individual sad event is thus determined. The other is based on the appearance of an uncompromising inevitability of the destruction of a value, a species of destruction which every tragedy must contain.

In every genuine tragedy we see more than just the tragic event. We see over and above it the permanent factors, associations, and powers which are in the very makeup of the world. It is these which make such a thing possible.⁴ In every tragic event we are directly confronted with a definite condition of the world's makeup without deliberation or any sort of "interpretation." This confronts us in the event itself; it does not result from what it does to the things which brought it about. It is only momentarily connected with the event and is independent of the elements that make it up. It is present in the form of a slight presentiment.

Every objective grief like that of a tragic event has its own depth. (I take the word here in a transferred meaning like the "depth" of a room.) It has its own immensity, too, which distinguishes it from a very limited, determined event. The depth is brought about by the fact that its subject is twofold. One is the element of the event that has been seen by us. The other is that point in the world's makeup that is exemplified by the event and of which the event is but an example. Grief seems to pour out from the event into unlimited space. It is not a universal, abstract world-makeup that would be the same in all tragic events. It is rather a definite, individual element of the world's construction. The remote subject of the tragic is always the world itself, the world taken as a whole which makes such a thing possible. This "world" itself seems to be the object immersed in sorrow. In the foreground of this darkness of sorrow we see the specific event and fate standing out all the more clearly.

The element in the world's makeup which produces these situations seems to do so without any warning. In producing them it ignores the peculiarities of the causes of the event and even its normal effects. It is this which causes the second essential element of the tragic, its inevitability.

We will clarify this later. Right now we are interested in the peculiar atmosphere which it lends to the tragedy.

There is a whole category of feelings and affections that can be connected with the destroying of a value. Their essence is in being "preventable," even if in a particular cast they may or may not have been prevented. It doesn't matter what these feelings might be—dread, fear, anger, horror, or the like; they all have in general the characteristic of "excitement." Thinking about the possibility of its turning out otherwise, or even better, causes this excitement. In men it is more frequently caused by the thought, "If so and so had only acted differently." This excitement is able to take hold of a man only because he is a practical being and, as it were, the potential actor in any event.

It softens when the inevitability is seen as an impossibility. The grief does not cease to be what it is, but it assumes the character of the feelings of dissatisfaction, excitement, and pain. These are taken in the same narrow sense as the physical feelings of fear, horror, and the like.

Tragic grief is pure, without physical arousal. In a certain sense even a feeling of "contentment" is joined with it.

There is no desire to do away with the event which led to the destruction of some value. This is abolished by seeing its inevitability.

We see that the tragic seems to have its ultimate roots in the essential makeup of the world itself. It is this which clears away all sense of culpability or responsibility. When we see this in the nature of the event a certain reconciliation takes place. It is a species of reconciliation which fills us with peace and rest and with resignation. This resignation banishes the weakness and pain that would come from contemplating a better-made world.

Thus the specific sadness of the tragic is really an objective character of the event itself. It is independent of the individual circumstances of the beholder. It is free from the feelings provoked by excitement, indignation, blame, and the like. It has a depth and immensity. It is not accompanied by physical feelings or by what can be called real pain. It has a definite resignation, contentment, and a species of reconciliation with the existence which it chances to have.

The Tragic Knot

WE asserted previously that in the tragic a struggle takes place between two objects possessing high positive value and that one of them must be overcome. There is one case where this is fulfilled to the highest degree. It happens when the objects are not different events, persons, or things, but coincide in one event, person, or thing; even better, in one and the same quality, power, or ability.

It would be most tragic if the same power which has brought either itself or another object to a very high positive value becomes its destroyer—especially if this takes place in the very act of its achievement.

If we are observing a certain action which is realizing a high value, and then see in that same action that it is working towards the undermining of the very existence of the being it is helping, we receive the most complete and the clearest of tragic impressions.

The same tragic impression occurs when a special courage or boldness which permits a man to accomplish an heroic deed undermines him because it exposes him to a danger that a moderately prudent man would avoid—"If only I were prudent enough I would not be called Tell." Another example is the man with high ideals toward a spiritual goal who permits them to become shipwrecked on the little things of life. Everyone according to Madame de Staël's dictum has the mistakes of his virtue: the same traits of character which permitted a man to do his best have brought him to catastrophe.

We don't have to talk only of human beings here. An art gallery can be destroyed by the very fire that was kindled to preserve the picture. The event has a sharp tragic character. The flight of Icarus is tragic. The very wax which glued his wings to him melts in the same degree as he flies toward the sun.

The use of the phrase, "the tragic knot," is a pertinent metaphor. It illustrates the inner entanglement between the creation of a value and the destruction of a value as they take place in the unity of the tragic action and the tragic event.

Something else can be deduced from the aforesaid. It is not the relationship between values that constitutes the "stage" for the tragic event, nor is it the connection of causal events which it contains. It is rather a special reference of the value relationships to the causal relationships. It is an essential characteristic of our world—and thus of every world—that the course of the causal events disregards completely the value of things. The exigencies of values as they develop toward a unity or as they unfold themselves toward their ideal fulfillment is not taken into account by the causal series. The simple fact that the sun shines on the good and bad alike makes tragedy possible. At times it may happen that the causal relationships simultaneously coincide with an increase of the values. This is accepted as only accidental. It is not occasioned by intrinsic determination. Nor is it occasioned by a consideration of what the values need to reach their fulfillment or that the causality is at hand to produce them.

Without this basic condition there can be no tragedy.

There would be no tragedy in a world which operated on an established system of laws whereby each thing had the powers and capabilities commensurate with its values, and whereby its activity was directed only towards the exigencies of developing or unifying these values. Tragedy would likewise be impossible in a world operating on a system of laws whereby the powers would be directed against the exigencies of these values, purposely opposing them. The tragic would thrive in a satanic world as well as in a divine—a fact that Schopenhauer forgot in his discussion of the tragic.

We see the tragic only when in one glance we embrace both the causality of things and the exigencies of their immanent values. In this unified glance the mind tries to synthesize the conditions in which it finds these values so as to arrive at the unity it is trying to achieve. Then it follows the course of events in their causal sequence. The result is a clear insight into the independence of these two things. It is here that we may see the formal "background" of all tragedies.

Obviously, it is not in the mere knowledge of this circumstance that the tragic exists. The tragic comes into sight only when this independence of the two elements becomes embodied in a concrete event.

What has just been said casts new light on our definition. For never is our insight so clear and so concentrated as when we see that the same action may in some places produce a high value and in others—quite indifferently—destroy this value.

Here then—where we are able to see the unity of an action at a single glance and not by discursive connection, limb by limb—here is a circumstance known previously only by concept which has now come tangibly within our grasp.

WHAT do we mean when we say that in the tragic the destruction of value is "necessary"? Surely not the destruction of causality in general!

Is the question then one of "causal" necessity or is it likely to be one of quite another kind of necessity? Here one might begin to discriminate and say that it is indeed causal necessity but of a particular kind, that is, "inner necessity," and consequently a necessity which depends not on influences breaking in from the outer world but rather on the eternal nature of things and men. Only as such can things and men undergo the tragic fate. Actually, this concept of the tragic—widely held though it may be—is not borne out by the facts.

When a man who seems destined for a certain fate, either by congenital disease or by any sort of natural predisposition, is brought low the first time that external circumstance has a chance to work upon him—such an event does not seem tragic to us even if the highest values inhered in him, values independent of this natural predisposition. Thus Ibsen, with all his artistic genius, has not succeeded in making of Oswald, in *Ghosts*, a tragic figure, since the worm of destruction gnawing at Oswald is the result of a disease he has inherited from his father. We miss here something that belongs to the essence of the tragic hero: that the evil which drives the hero to his downfall pertain to those against whom the struggle is being waged, and also that such a struggle be actually waged.

Both these requirements are missing in *Ghosts*. Nor is the tragic hero to be found in him who immediately surrenders to the inimical, and who at the first dismissive word, immediately abnegates and resigns himself. The "necessity" of which we are now speaking must rather be of such a kind as to take its course even after the performance of all the "free" actions that may be tried in an attempt at flight. When we see the catastrophe opposed by all free efforts of will and means, and can still trace its irruption as "necessary"; when we can even trace, through the turmoil and anguish of this struggle to avert the catastrophe, a species of transcendent necessity; then and then only do we have an example before us of tragic "necessity."

Tragic necessity is not the necessity of the course of nature, a necessity which lies beneath freedom and the power of the will and which may be conceived as the free essence which permits the best linking of events in nature. Rather is tragic necessity of such a kind that it lies *above* freedom: it is to be found only in the conclusion of free acts or of "free causes" in the total sphere of causality, in which may be found even "unfree causes," that is, those which are the results of prior causes.

Wherever men are presented as "milieu-defined," as completely determined by "relationships," as in the naturalist "drama," we have a much less likely source of the tragic than in the drama which gives us the impression that consciously free choices are clearly and conclusively driving the events of the play

to its catastrophe. Consequently neither naturalism and determinism on the one hand nor the rationalistic thesis of a "freedom of the human will" limited only by the chances of nature can provide a comprehension of the tragic, or anything more than the beginning of such comprehension. Both these views of the world have no place for the tragic since they make no provision for essential necessity reaching out above the qualities of nature and free choice.

There is still another reason why it is inadequate to define as "inner" that species of necessity we are here discussing. Immanent cause is that which in a thing or in a person exists as latent predisposition, or capacity, or skill, which functions at the inception of true relationships to other things or situations or persons. Wherever we encounter a strictly defined predisposition to the decline of value we must recognize an absence of the true development, of the veridical renewal, of the inner historicity which is needed for the tragic event: in such a situation the catastrophe itself would be predictable if we had a firm and exact picture of the character. The tragic however contains this paradox that when we behold the destruction of value it seems completely "necessary" and at the same time completely "unpredictable." Though the catastrophe may come closer and closer, driven by all the contributory factors (whether free or not), and each new event is visibly pregnant with danger, yet there must still remain one moment when everything—even by ideal calculation—could still turn out quite differently: whereupon from all this complexity is brought forth a deed which resolves these lurking factors into the unity of one species of reality by a means not rationally predictable.

The seemingly "propitious turn of events" just before the catastrophe, which so many tragic poets have been fond of, is a special means to exclude from the audience even the slightest appearance of "predictability." Even the increase of tension, which every tragedy must arouse, would not be possible if the catastrophe did not seem to us to be well founded from the beginning in the latent inner qualities of the characters and their relationships. It is *concrete* causality, which has nothing to do with "natural law," which governs tragic events as it also governs the irreversible motions of the constellations in their consummation of causality—that species of causality which is rightly called the truly "historical." For this we must return to the assertion of Schopenhauer that tragedy never exhibits true "character development" but only "character revelation," revelation of what was previously latent as disposition and character.

Even the tragic transformation of a character, the alteration of disposition and mentality, the essential and latent diversion from the previous course of life—even this transformation is seldom either the catastrophe itself or even an important part of it. A specifically tragic phenomenon is to be seen in the interruption—even in the midst of external victories—of a course of life directed towards certain values as goals. Tragic necessity is to be seen above all in the essence and essential relations of the inevitability and inescapability of things founded in society.

Even these negative definitions indicate that the species of "necessity" we have been talking about becomes apparent only when every conceivable kind of skill seems to be brought into play to halt the destruction of value and to

preserve the value in question. Consequently two species of value-destruction are essentially untragic: first, those instances which are tinged with guilt because someone has failed in a duty definitely assigned to him; second, those instances which might have been avoided by the use of available techniques and means. In general, then, the quality of the tragic is lacking when the question "Who is guilty?" has a clear and definite answer.

Only where no such answer can be given does the stuff of tragedy begin to appear. We may use the term "tragic" only when we feel that everyone concerned in the story has hearkened to the demands of his duty with the utmost of his capabilities, and yet the disaster has had to occur. The tragic consists—at least in human tragedies—not simply in the absence of "guilt" but rather in the fact that the guiltiness can not be localized. Wherever we can substitute, in place of a man who plays a role in the unfolding of a catastrophe, another man who is like the first but morally better—that is, one who has a finer sympathy for moral opportunities as well as a greater energy of the moral will—to the extent that we can perform such substitution the growth of a feeling of tragedy is stunted by the amount of blame we can pin on the responsible person.

In such an instance "necessity" is missing as a quality of the tragic phenomena. Consider, for example, the death of Christ; suppose we were able to have the idea that his death, instead of being an essential relationship between His divine purity and the profaneness and opposition of an obdurate "world," had been brought about by the particular moral laxity of Pontius Pilate, or by the wickedness of an individual named Judas, or by the inimical deeds of the Jews. If we were then able to imagine Jesus of Nazareth surrounded not by these men but by a group morally "better," or if we could place him in a different historical context where he would come to higher recognition and repute—if we could do these things the impression of the tragic would vanish.

The death of Jesus is tragic only when it is presented—everywhere and forever—as the consistent adherence to the higher duty of all the parties concerned. An execution, for example, can never have a tragic culmination. The tragic appears when the idea itself of "justice" appears as leading to the destruction of higher value. An execution, if it is unavoidable, awakens deep sympathy; if it were avoidable it might arouse deep anger or irritation, but never tragic sympathy.⁵

If it is true that a disaster becomes tragic only when everyone has done his duty and, in the usual sense of the word, no one has incurred "guilt," it becomes part of the essence of tragic conflict that this conflict be guiltless and unavoidable even before judges who approach the ideal in wisdom and virtue. The tragic misdeed is even definable as that which silences all possible moral and legal powers of judgment; and, on the other hand, every conflict is essentially untragic when by moral and legal lights it is seen to be obvious and simple. Every essential confusion of the bounds of right and wrong, of good and evil, in the unity of action; every maze of threads, of motives, of views, of duties, so presented as to seem to lead equally well to a judgment of "right" or "wrong"; every complication which is not based on necessary moral and legal wisdom but which instead produces from the circumstances alone an ab-

solite confusion of our moral and legal powers of judgment—every such complication pertains to the subjective side of tragic feeling and thereby transposes us completely from the realm of possible "right" and "wrong," from possible "accusation" and "indignation." "Tragic guilt" is of a kind for which no one can be blamed and for which no conceivable "judge" can be found.

Out of this error of our moral judgments, out of this pardonable search for a subject upon whom to pin this "guilt," a guilt which appears to us as such with crystal clarity—only out of this appears that specific tragic grief and tragic sympathy of which we have been speaking, along with its unique peace and reconciliation of the emotions. Now too the shifting of that which is to be feared to the cosmos itself appears as the essence of the reconciliation of the individual men and wills with the culminating deeds and events in which they have been taking part.

In this way, tragic guilt becomes something other than definable "right" and "wrong," or than "obeying obligation" or "defying obligation."

But individual men have quite different microcosms of values, dependent on the extent of their actual moral awareness and even on the extent of their possible moral awareness. Only on these bases can be measured their possible "duties" and areas of duty—quite independently of all the peculiarities of their empirical real situations. If every individual does his "duty," to the extent that he does this he behaves *morally*; not otherwise can he do something of equal *value* or *be* in any way of equal value. How deep his gaze thereby penetrates into the macrocosm of moral value, which contains the entire extent of the realm of possible good and evil, and how deep a hold he takes within this macrocosm, are in no way to be decided by the extent to which each individual dutifully produces the "best" of the realm of values with which he has been endowed. It is not duty and the performance of it that "ennoble"—as the Kantian, short-sighted ethic puts it—but rather "noblesse oblige": this is the original nobility of man, which establishes for him quite varied arrays of possible duties—duties which stand in varied relationships to the moral world and are variously "significant" for it.

It makes a difference whether the man doing his duty is a grocer or a noble king; the first one in a vague way obeys a few moral value-distinctions, doing his "duty" with a couple of poor concepts of choice, while the other, living in the fullness of manifold human and other moral relationships, with a finely articulated and higher realm of moral value-distinctions before his eyes, does his "duty" while he demonstrates the highest value given to him, and in will and deed realizes this value. The latter man in this action must conduct himself as occasionally opposed to duty, while the man blind to value blandly performs his "duty." If we were now to say that in a true tragic presentation everyone must do his "duty," or at least that it would be prudent so to do, and that—even if everyone has done his duty—the destruction of value and the consequent lessening of the total moral value of the world must nevertheless take place, we would thereby still not know how to exclude this quite different dimension of the moral value-distinction of the individual and of his being taking part in the tragedy. It is rather a quite different species of the tragic which, in this dimension of being, bruises "noble" individuals against

the strongly articulated "duties" of the mob. And it appears to be a particular melancholy-ironic glory of this kind of tragedy that the noble individual should accept a moral guilt that his companions do not accept. To the extent that the noble person can more easily become "guilty" than the ignoble—in accord with his richer and higher realm of duties—he is susceptible to a moral "risk" which ever bears with it something potentially tragic, as this risk simultaneously praises and blames his noble nature. The Prometheus of technic, who stole fire from Zeus, is a tragic figure; but even more tragic are the moral Prometheuses in whose eyes a moral world comes with the brilliance of lightning, a moral world that never previously existed. . . . While they are realizing values and acquiring duties which the vulgar do not yet know how to see as value or to feel as duty, the vulgar are themselves only doing their "duty" while the noble see as "evil" what may still be "good" for the vulgar. Here is one instance of the tragic "fall" for the "noble," in that his every eventual moral disapproval of the vulgar must necessarily remain silent—to the extent that only through "good consciences" can his sacred "duty" be accomplished.

We can now penetrate more deeply into "tragic guilt" if we are careful to remain clear on the matter of what, in such a case, is the completion of the duty of the noble. Let it be a proposition here—with no attempt at proof—that moral "good" is the relation by which we realize or tend to realize in a given action that a preference indicates a more highly conceived value.⁶ To prefer the higher value is always equivalent to depreciating the lower value, that is, to discontinue the realization of this lower value. However, all "moral norms," i.e., all imperative rules of a general type, are only exercises in what to will and what to do, as suggested by the average levelling of values in any given epoch resulting from the "situations" which are typical of and regularly recurring in this epoch; still, even this levelling of values provides "higher" values which must be realized. Every material rule of morality contains the presuppositions of the particular positive world of good appropriate to its level of civilization. What happens then when the "noble" man perceives a value which is higher than the average, a value which is generally trodden under in the levelling of values, and accomplishes his advance in the moral cosmos of value, an advance that the vulgar are not yet ready to grasp? In such a case it must be obvious to him that what appears "good" and "dutiful" according to the ruling morality now becomes wicked and evil—and by the same token becomes for him "opposed to duty." And this realization is not avoidable but rather—to use a term of Kant's—a "necessary perception" ("notwendiger Schein"). And since everything that can be generally a "moral law"—even to the most complete codification and strongly logical presentation of these laws—inevitably exhibits the positive material world of values of the "time," the "time" itself being determined by the prevailing system of value-levelling—such a man must violate the prevailing moral precept and also violate everything in the moral world that comes into the orbit of such precepts. He must necessarily appear "guilty" even before the fairest judge, when he is in fact guiltless and is so seen by God alone. That this is so is not an irregularity but rather part of the essence of all moral development. Here I mean to point out the root of that necessary and "guiltless guilt," which has hitherto been ex-

pressed in this paradoxical form only with a feeling for the justice of it. What is essential here is the necessity of the deception into which the most just moralist must blunder when confronted with the "tragic hero." Although the tragic hero with moral awareness⁷ is obviously essentially the opposite of a sinner, he can not be distinguished from a sinner by the age in which he lives. Only to the extent that his newly experienced value becomes established and becomes the prevailing "morality" can he be seen and known—and then only in historical retrospect—as a moral hero. And so there are no present tragedies—there are only tragedies of the past. The tragic man necessarily goes his way in his "present" quiet and speechless. He strides unrecognized through the mob; he may even be there considered a sinner. The error of an instance which separates genius from sinner is here not an accidental but a necessary error. Here, in this tragic fate of the moral genius we can perhaps grasp, in a single species and fashion, the nerve of fate, the complete unpredictability of moral development in man. And even in the absolutely inevitable "fate" and the related absolute loneliness of the moral genius we can see a moment of the type of the tragic, as it may have happened to Jesus in Gethsemane. Here likewise appears the total fate of the world as it appears compressed into the experience of one man, as though in this moment he were standing alone and yet in the "middle," in the center of all the forces that animate the universe. His experience is as though whole epochs of history occurred in him, yet with no one else being aware of his experience—as though everything lay unified in his hand. And perhaps through this something more may become clear: the tragic hero of this kind is not guilty of his guilt, but rather it "happens" to him: this justifiable circumlocution repeats a very characteristic moment of "tragic guilt." That is: that the "guilt" comes to him and not he to the guilt!... *"Ihr fuhr ins Leben ihn hinein..."*

Nevertheless this "fall" into guilt does not mean that the tragic hero, either through immoderate passion or through stress and a drive in one direction, is so moved that this drive becomes the central point of his ego and his will consequently is impelled in this same direction. This is also the case in the usual moral guiltiness—at least in great measure; and quantities cannot here serve as a basis for differentiation. Even in the midst of the most powerful stresses the will which "follows" such a direction remains a new action, an action not entirely determined by this stress! The tragic guilt into which the hero "falls" is such more accurately characterized by calling it a "guilty" doing or renunciation of doing which darkens the areas of his possible choices and so makes a certain kind of guilt unavoidable, since the choice of the "best" meaning is necessarily in error.

Moral or "guilty guilt" is based on the act of choice; tragic or unguilty guilt is rather based on the sphere of choice! The act of choice is consequently for the tragic hero free of guilt—just the reverse of what obtains in moral guilt, in which the sphere of choice also entails objectively guiltless possibilities, and only the guilt of the act is important. And so the tragic hero "becomes guilty" while doing a guiltless thing.

The consequence of what has been said is the absurdity of the schoolmasters' theory that a moral guiltiness is to be sought in tragedies, and that

the tragic poet instead of being a respectable performer of a tragic phenomenon is made into a moral judge over his heroes, whom he punishes for their deeds while at the same time he animates them to perform those deeds. Only total blindness for the phenomenon of tragedy could hatch out this silliest of all theories.

But we should also fall into error if we should try to make the correct concept of tragic guilt serve as the complete definition of the tragic phenomenon. However, since from its earliest presentations the tragic has been a universal phenomenon, not one specifically human or limited to static will, such a definition is self-destructive. However, note this: where a "tragic guilt" is actually portrayed—and it is not the deed of the hero which brings the guilt upon him or is involved in the "catastrophe," nor is his downfall the bearer of the tragic phenomenon, but rather the "guilt of error" itself, and consequently the fact that purity of will falls into guilt—here is the very bearer and root of the tragic.

In this way it is tragic that Othello falls into the guilt of having to kill his beloved, and that guiltless Desdemona should be killed by her beloved who loves her. In his own words, "For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die," the death of Othello is not punishment for his deed, which as "punishment" must terminate a conscious evil; rather is it deliverance. Tragic guilt is therefore not a condition of the tragic phenomenon—which would indeed be a *circulus in demonstrando*, if the guilt had to be not any sort of "guilt" but only "tragic" guilt—but it is a species of the tragic itself, and to the extent that we are here dealing with moral value, it is therefore a species of absolute value—so to speak, the culminating point of the tragic. Neither death nor any other mischance but only his "fall into guilt" constitutes the tragic fate of the hero.

Translated by BERNARD STAMBLER

NOTES:

¹ Even the famous definition of Aristotle: The tragic is that which arouses pity and fear.

² Cf. Maeterlinck's *La Sageste et la Destinée*.

³ That the quality of the sad is definitely not a "feeling," nor a so-called "empathic feeling," cf. the essay, "Idole der Selbsterkenntnis."

⁴ We mean "such a thing" in the sense of "a so-constituted value."

⁵ It is for this reason that Aeschylus, in his *Eumenides*, furnishes the judges of the Areopagus with both black and white marbles to indicate the guilt or innocence of Orestes.

⁶ Cf. my book, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, vol. I, Niemeyer, Halle, 1914.

⁷ We are speaking here only of this kind and not of the tragic hero in general.

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